

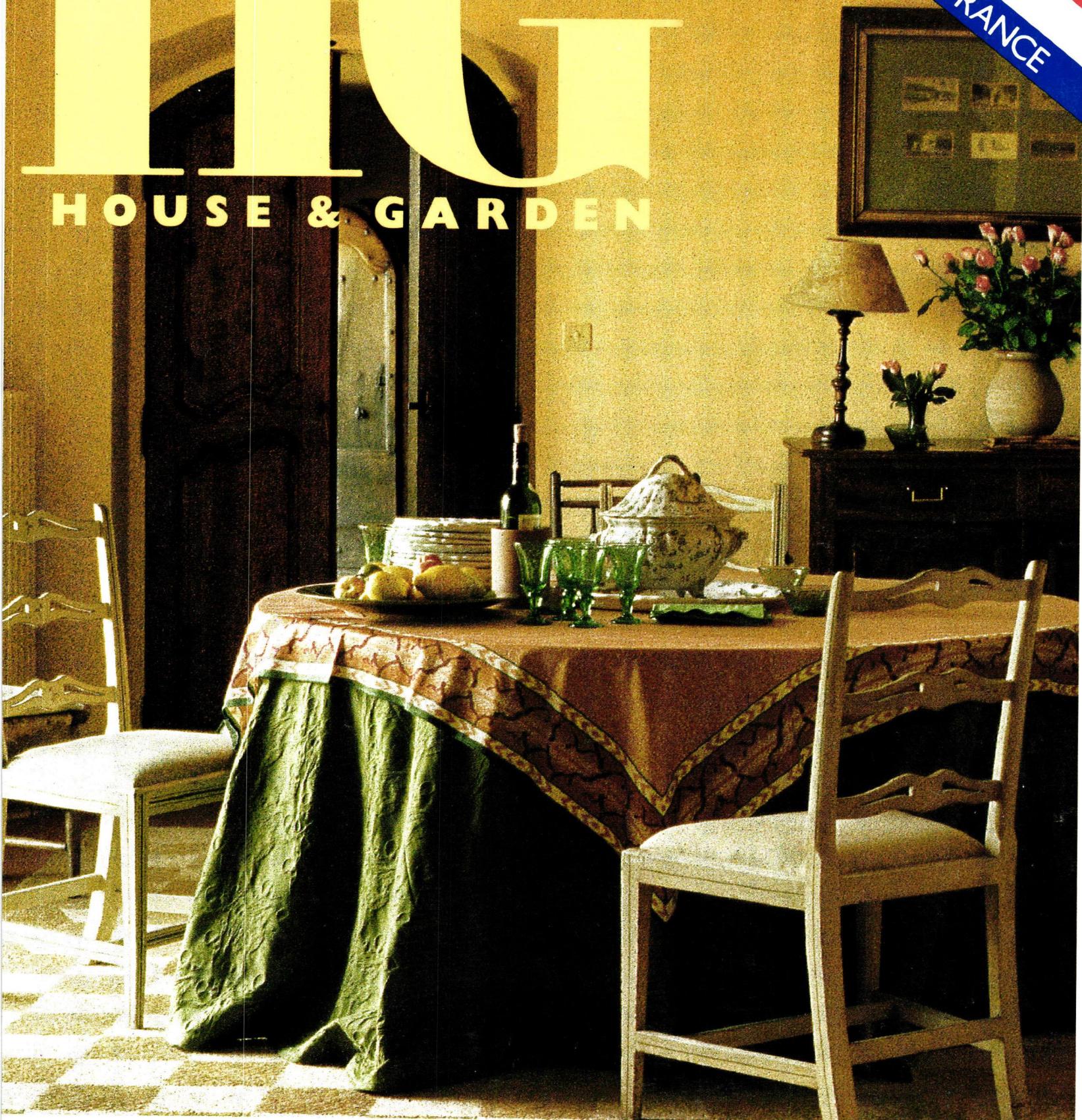
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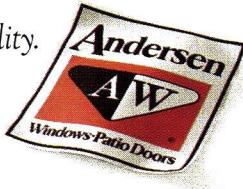
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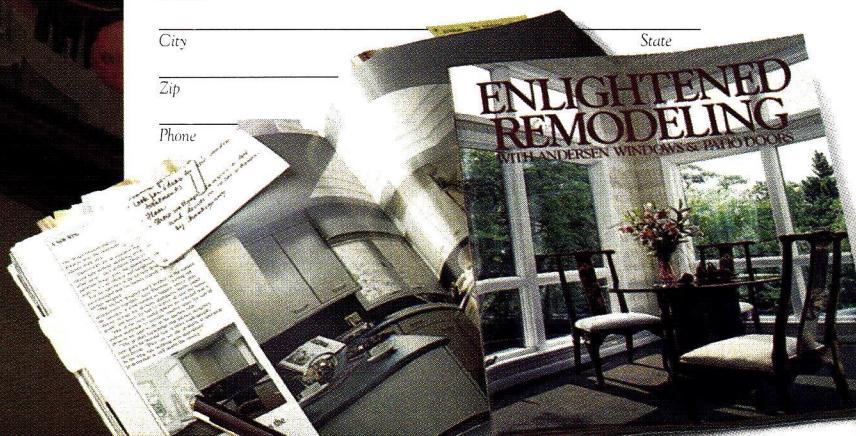
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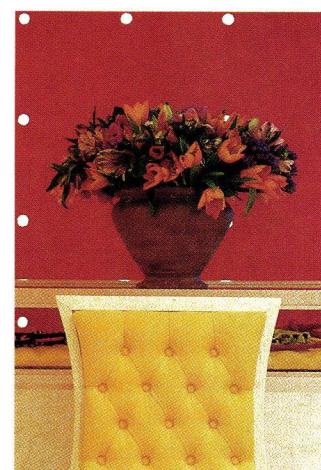
# HG

HOUSE & GARDEN  
JULY 1989

Volume 161, Number 7



*Marie-Paule Pelle's entry hall, above, features wooden evergreens and her dog, Ouzo. Page 68. Photograph by Alexandre Bailhache. Below: Decorator Jacques Grange. Page 92. Photograph by Francois Halard.*



*In Christian Lacroix's Paris boutique, a tufted chair, above, by Bonetti and Garouste. Page 132. Photograph by Thibault Jeanson.*

**On the Rue de Rivoli** Marie-Paule Pelle lives with the visual flair that is her signature. By Charles Gandee **68**

**Starck Modern** Philippe Starck makes his architectural debut with a dramatic house on the Seine. By Charles Gandee **78**

**Legacy of Splendor** The newly restored Musée Camondo commemorates a passionate collector of eighteenth-century furniture. By Martin Filler **86**

**Le Style Jacques Grange** Like his high-profile clients, decorator Jacques Grange is an international star. A portfolio of recent work displays a striking counterpoint of luxury and restraint. By Edmund White **92**

**Prisoners of Taste** For the French, *chacun* really doesn't have *son goûts*. By Jane Kramer **106**

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**What Price Glory?** To cement his place in French history, François Mitterrand decreed the \$3 billion architecture program that has changed the face of Paris. By Martin Filler **118**

**The Essence of Provence** Three generations of Amics have found refuge in a Provençal family retreat. By Charla Carter **126**

**Barbarians at Play** Paris designers Mattia Bonetti and Elizabeth Garouste have polished their neo-primitive style. By Charles Gandee **132**

**The Hands of Time** The varied treasures of an American's Paris apartment reveal a fascination with the enigmatic encounter. By Ingrid Sischy **136**

**Norman Retreat** Investment banker Nicholas Worms finds tranquillity in a country house in Normandy. By Rhoda Koenig **142**

**Royal Lineage** In the town house of Louis XIV's architect, decorator Jacques Garcia's apartment recalls the majesty of Versailles. By G. Y. Dryansky **148**

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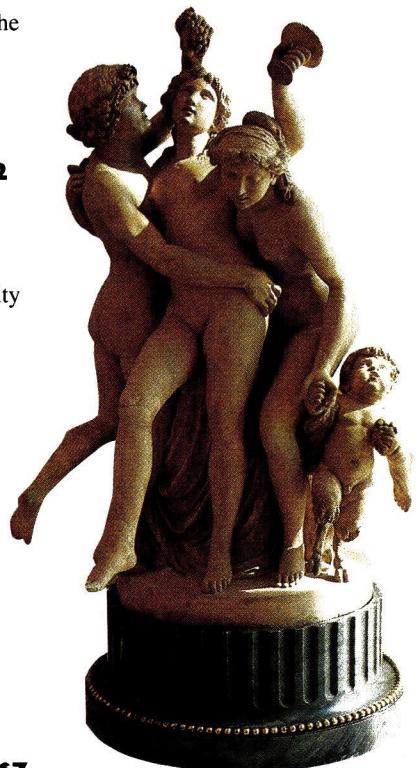
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**COVER** The dining table is set with *Moustiers faience* at *La Prouveresse*, Jean and Irène Amic's summer house in the south of France. Page 126. Photograph by François Halard.



*Among the treasures of the Musée Camondo is Bacchanale, above, a terra-cotta sculpture by Clodion, 1770. Page 86. Photograph by Jacques Dirand.*

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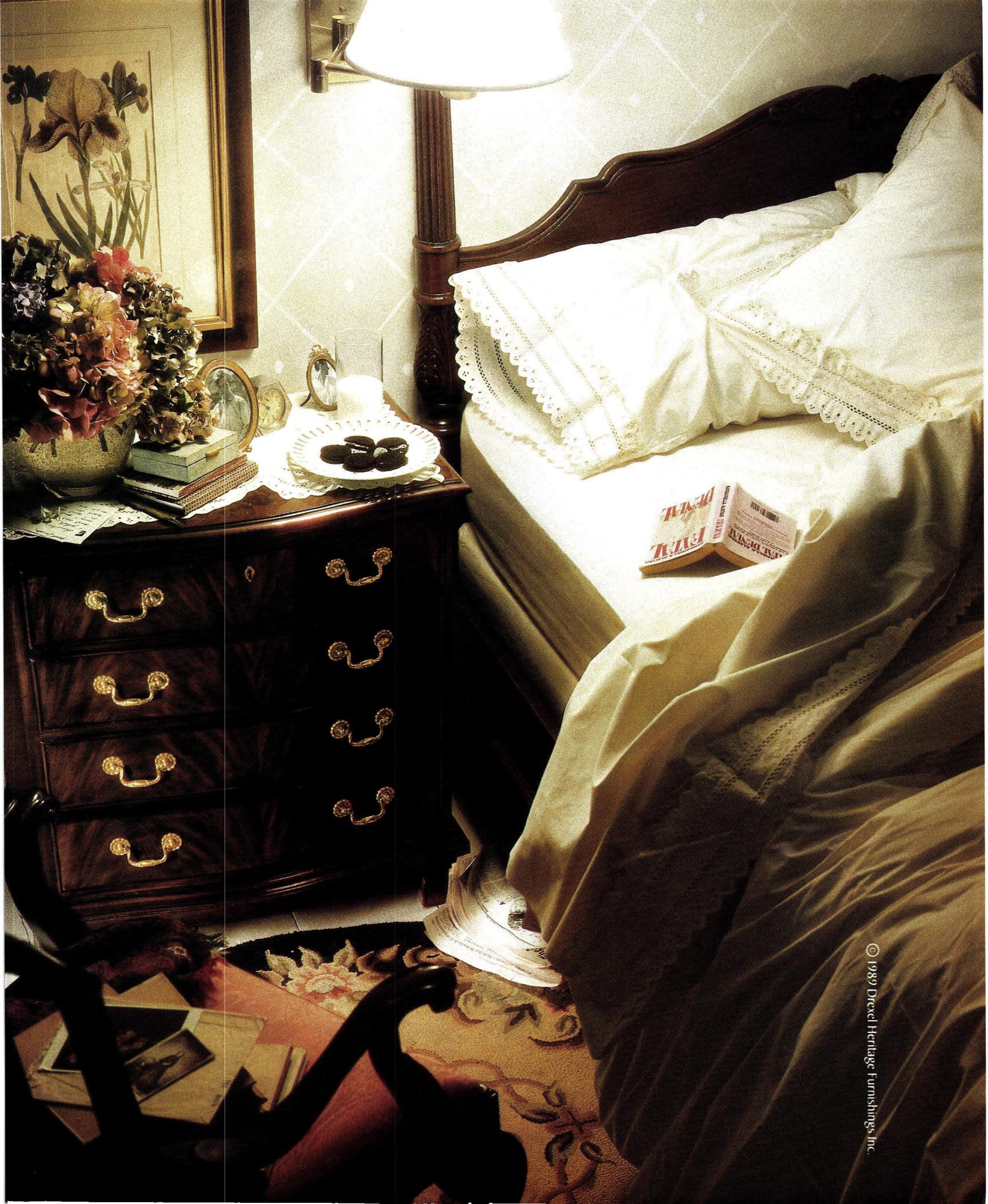
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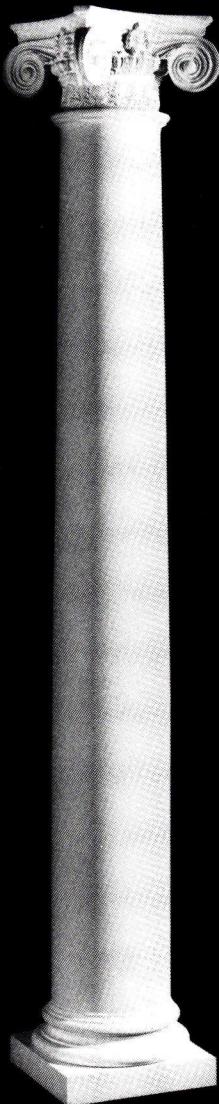


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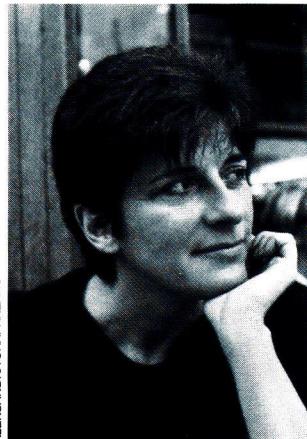
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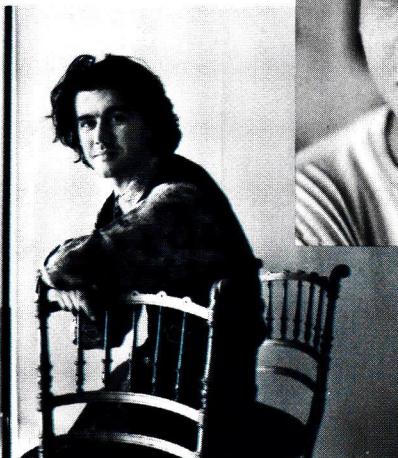
# CONTRIBUTORS NOTES

**Jane Kramer**, whose most recent book is *Europeans*, writes the "Letter from Europe" for *The New Yorker*. In this month's HG, she reports on the French invention of taste: "They are the only people in the world who have managed to create a consumer economy based on the supply and demand of their opinions of each other."



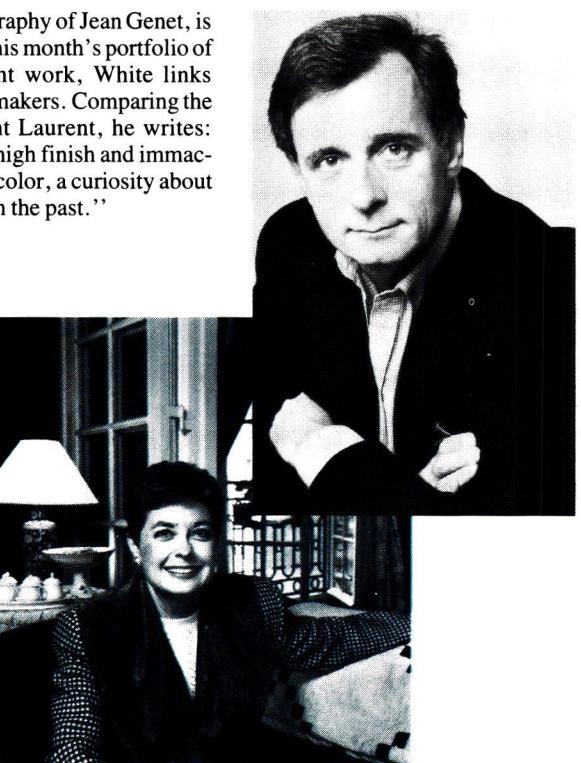
ALEKSANDRA CRAPANZANO

**Alexandre Baillache** compares taking pictures to eating, citing his desire for variety and flavor. For this issue he photographed Marie-Paule Pellé's apartment in Paris—"I didn't dare nibble on the chocolate fish in her kitchen"—and captured France's peerless craftsmen for "Workroom."



IVAN TERESTCHENKO

**Pascal Chevallier** likes to mix decoration, people, and fashion in his photographs, adding "lots of theatrical details to create interesting *mise en scènes*." For July "Notes," Chevallier posed French designers with their latest chairs, creating "postcards with glorious views of Paris and its monuments."



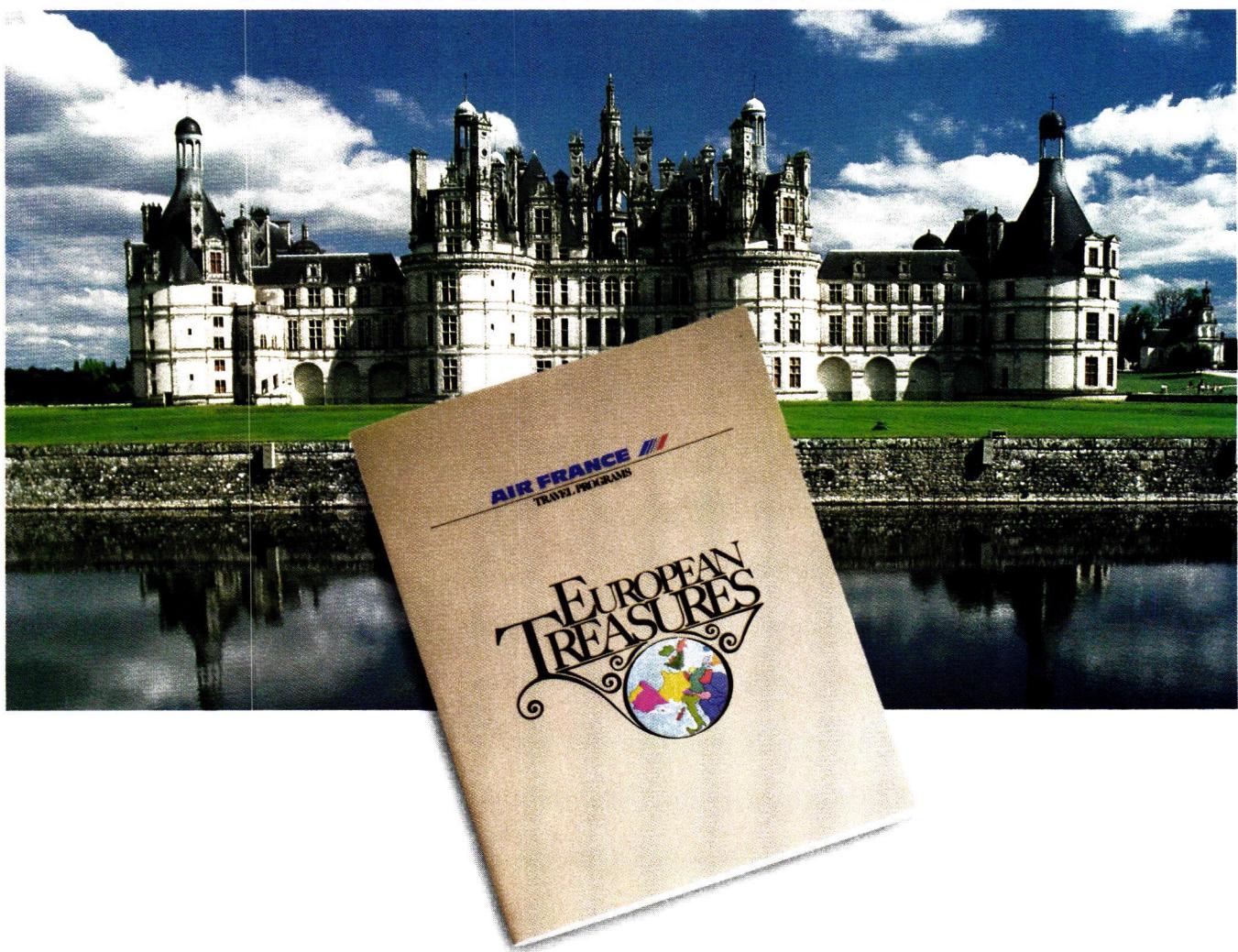
ALAIN LE KIM

**Edmund White**, currently at work on a biography of Jean Genet, is the author of *A Boy's Own Story*, a novel. In this month's portfolio of Parisian decorator Jacques Grange's recent work, White links Grange's style with that of other French tastemakers. Comparing the decorator with fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent, he writes: "Both men represent the French tradition of high finish and immaculate construction. Both have a sure sense of color, a curiosity about the whole Mediterranean world, an interest in the past."

**Patricia Wells**, the restaurant critic for the *International Herald Tribune* and *L'Express*, is the author of *The Food Lover's Guide to Paris* and *The Food Lover's Guide to France*. Of her search for French hotels with wonderful restaurants, she says: "I looked for places with real personality. No traveler wants to say, 'I saw this last week in London.' "

THOMAS VICTOR

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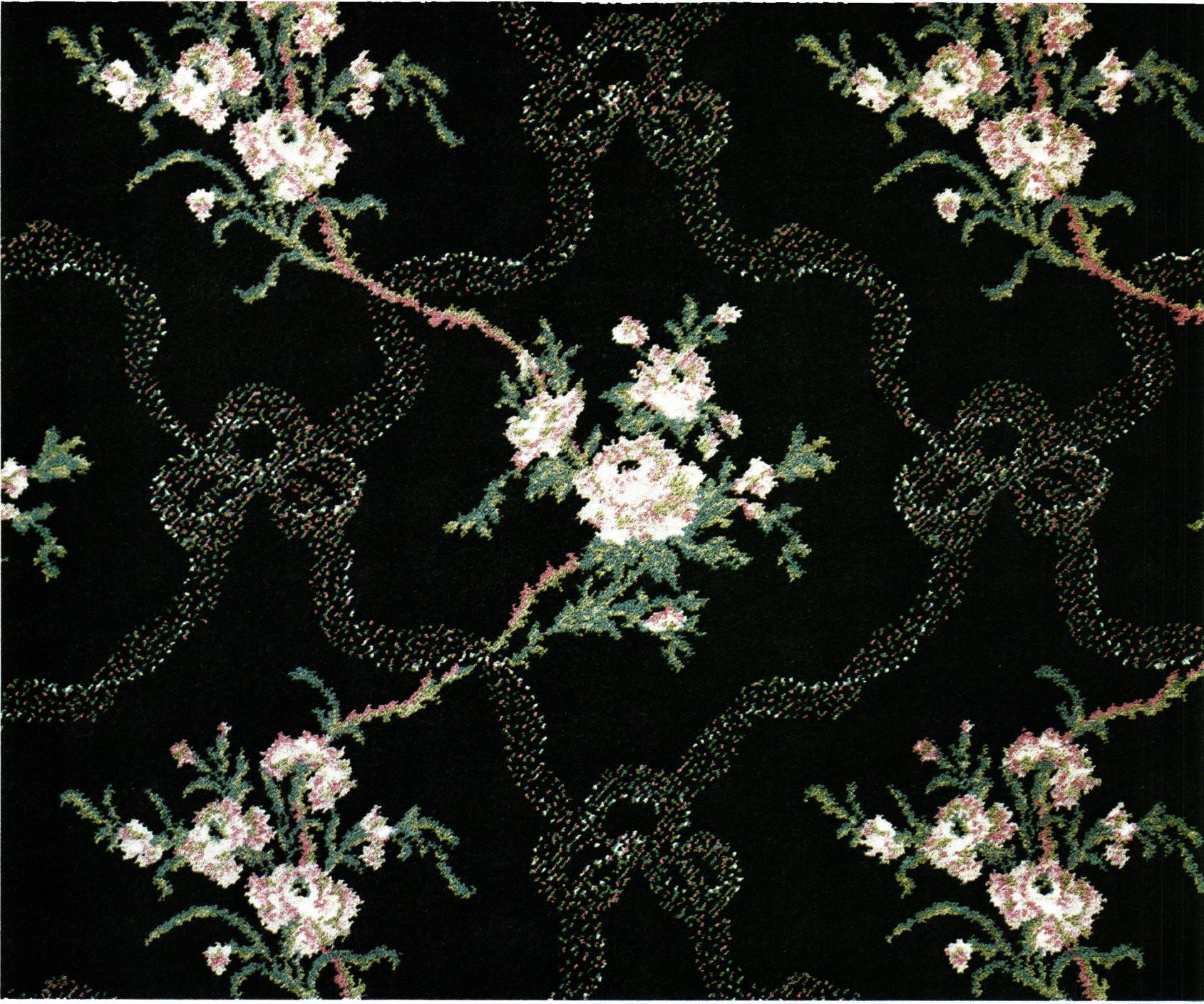
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# NOTES

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French spirit in design

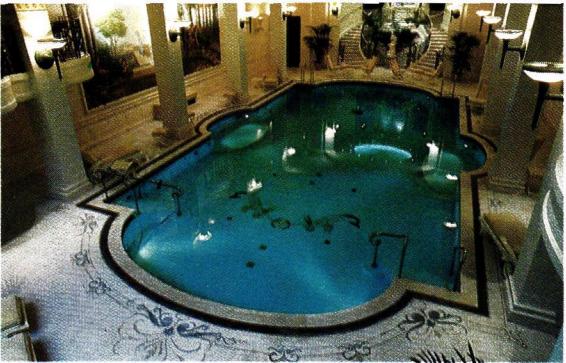


PASCAL CHEVALLIER

## THE BEST SEATS IN PARIS

Paris is giving Milan a run for its reputation as furniture design capital of the world thanks to a new generation of young designers committed to redefining the concept of fine French furniture. Among the brighter stars in the City of Light are (from top) architect Jean Nouvel, whose aluminum and polyurethane Profils chair explores the outer limits of modern technology; designer Jean

Michel Wilmutte, who replaced the classic garden chairs in the Palais-Royal with a decidedly more contemporary version; and the Dutch team of Arnold van Geuns and Clemens Rameckers, who made their debut as furniture designers in January with Neo-classical-style pieces that recall, with a wink and a smile, the glory that was. Details see Resources.



#### IN THE SWIM

In keeping with its tradition of luxury, the Hôtel Ritz in Paris recently completed a nine-year \$150 million transformation, including the addition of a health club and pool. The pool (above left) was inspired by the work of 19th-century English artist Alma-Tadema and features marble mosaics in a casing of *trompe l'oeil*. For visitors suffering jet lag the health club offers the ozotherm treatment by which one is bathed in purified air and essential oils.

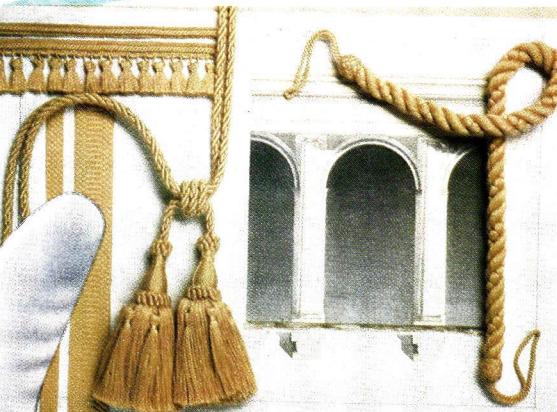


#### FROM BARN TO BARNEYS

Original Art Deco Ercuis flatware (above) and hollowware were recently discovered in a barn near the Ercuis factory in France. Silver-plated and shipped stateside, the pieces range from olive servers to ice buckets. Flatware \$15-\$100, hollowware \$200-\$700. Exclusively at Barneys New York.

#### RINGING IN THE NEW

Before René Lalique gained fame for Art Deco crystal designs, he was one of France's leading jewelers with clients like Sarah Bernhardt. Marie-Claude Lalique is now picking up where her grandfather left off. As president and designer for the company, she's expanded the collection to include shimmering crystal rings (below) in jewel tones—amethyst, emerald, and sapphire. Available for \$160 at Lalique, NYC, and fine department stores across the country.



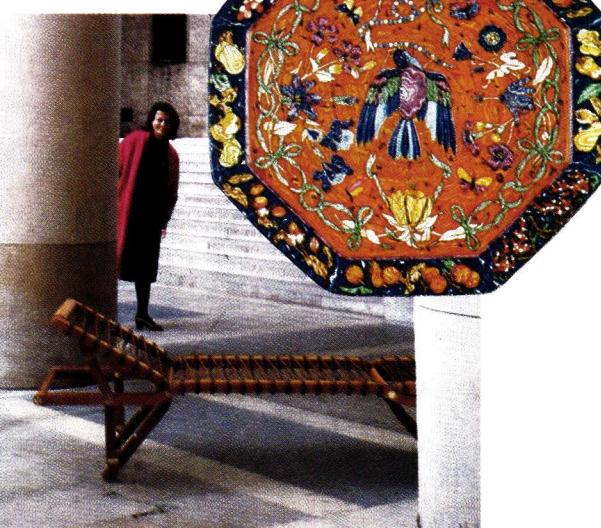
#### TRIMMED TO A TEE

Handcrafted and made with the finest silks, cottons, and wools, *passementerie* by Houlès (left) is more than just decoration—it is an art. One of Paris's top creators of elegant tassels, braids, and fringe, Houlès has made its U.S. debut with showrooms in Los Angeles and at the D & D Building in New York. To the trade only; for nearest representative call (213) 652-6171.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: MONICA STEVENSON; PATRICK VAN ROBAEY; SYLVIE BINET; PASCAL CHEVALLIER; COURTESY OF HOULES, PARIS

**HERMÈS AT HOME**  
Hermès introduces *Pierres d'Orient et d'Occident*, a line of fine porcelain tableware, including (right) a cake platter, \$375, inspired by the Florentine stonework at the Medici court. Rena Dumas, who designs the interiors of all Hermès shops (below), with a chaise longue she created out of pearwood with leather supports, \$8,795. Both at Hermès boutiques nationwide.

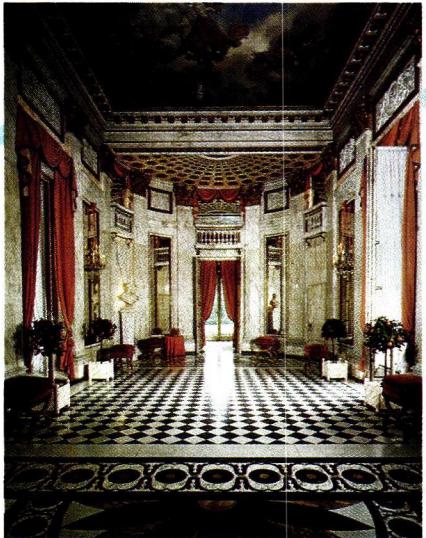
# NOTES



VEUILLEZ NE PAS ME REVEILLER

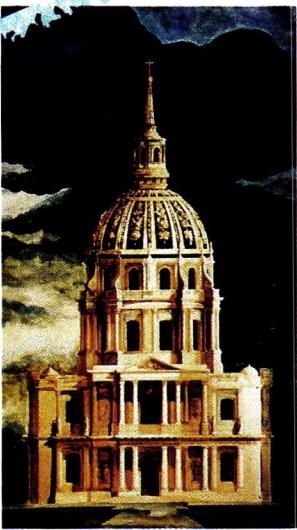
## SOUND ADVICE

Only a Frenchman could be responsible for the design of the witty bed linens (above) retrieved by Porthault from its archives. The 1950 design, created by playwright and producer Sacha Guitry for his wife, features a sleeper's whispers embroidered on the pillows and top sheet. A four-piece queen-size bed set, \$1,232, at Porthault, NYC (212) 688-1660.



## PLEASURE PAVILION

In 1770, Louis XV commissioned architect Claude Nicolas Ledoux to build a small house at Louveciennes, 30 minutes west of Paris, for his mistress, Madame Du Barry. The result, the Pavillon de Musique de la Comtesse Du Barry, is a magnificent Neoclassical residence with views of Paris and the Seine. This hôtel particulier with its vast oval vestibule (above) is now available for a price tag estimated at \$20 million. By appointment only, from Sotheby's International, NYC (212) 606-4100.



## GILT TOPPING

The World Monuments Fund offers training for conservators, organizes financial support, and encourages governments to participate in historic restoration projects. It is currently collaborating with France on the restoration of the dome and rotunda of Paris's Hôtel des Invalides (left). For information call (212) 517-9367.

## THE POWER OF MYTH

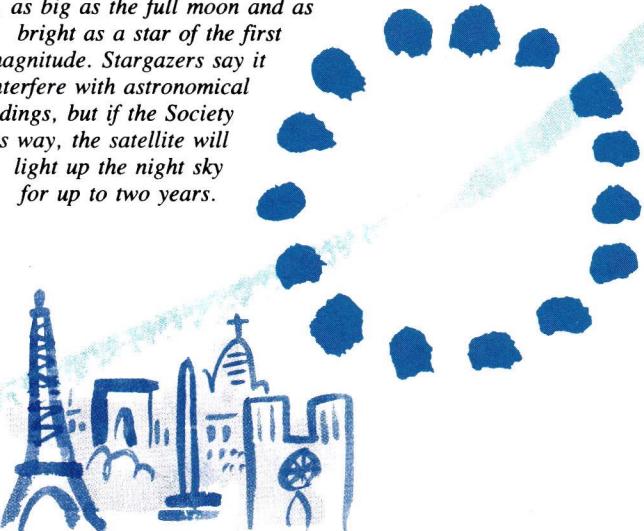
Turbulent skies and mythological sea creatures prevail in the fabrics of Robert le Héros, a company formed by four women fresh out of Paris's École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs.

Their spirited designs, including (right) *Under the Sign of Neptune* (also in blue and white), are available only through Nobilis Fontan, 29 rue Bonaparte, 75006 Paris; 43-29-21-50.

This fall Robert le Héros, in partnership with Nobilis Fontan, plans to storm the U.S. with their designs.

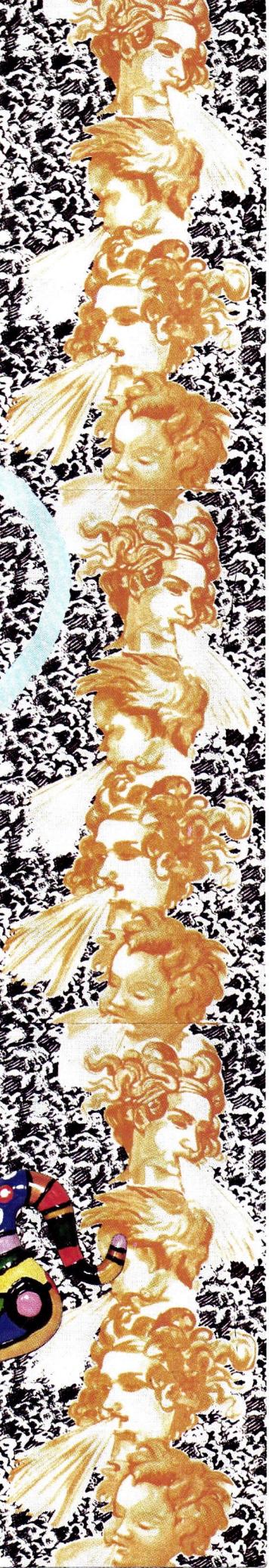
## TWINKLING TRIBUTE

In honor of the visionary spirit of Gustav Eiffel, the New Society for the Promotion of the Eiffel Tower in Paris is promoting a plan to launch into orbit a 15-mile ring studded with 100 light-reflecting balloons. If successful, the Ring of Light (right) would appear, for ten minutes each night, as big as the full moon and as bright as a star of the first magnitude. Stargazers say it would interfere with astronomical readings, but if the Society has its way, the satellite will light up the night sky for up to two years.



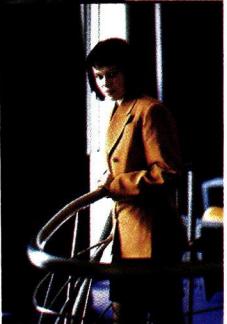
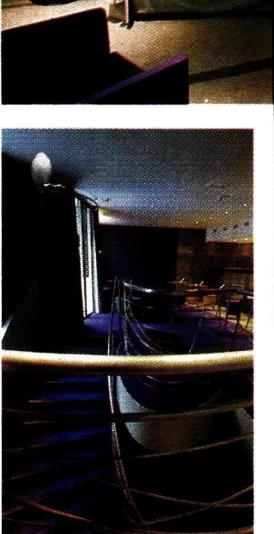
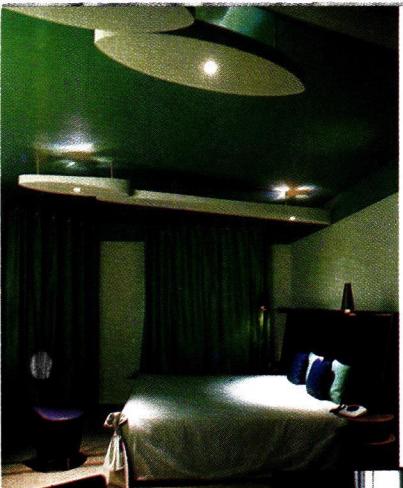
## UNIQUE BOUTIQUE

There are few chances to buy works of big-name artists at reasonable prices. But the Société des Amis du Musée National d'Art Moderne has commissioned artists to create "useful objects with a sense of beauty," in limited editions. This year's lineup includes (right) Niki de Saint-Phalle's colorful snake pin, and Richard Artschwager's marble clock. At the Centre Pompidou, Paris.



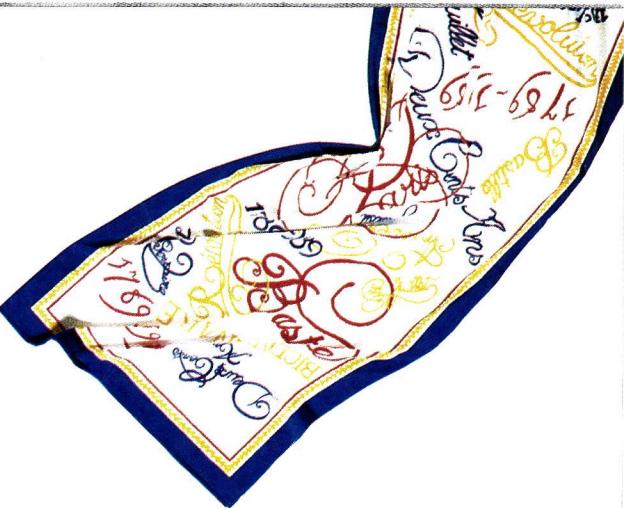
## WHEN THE ROOM IS THE VIEW

If the Ritz is a bit too pricey and the Crillon a bit too grand, there's a new alternative in Paris for travelers in search of chic hotel accommodations. Designed by Marie-Christine Dorner (below), a 28-year-old decorator who might easily be mistaken for a Sorbonne student, the 35-room hotel La Villa (left and below left) is to Paris what the Royalton is to New York—young, hip, and seriously modern. One block from the legendary café Les Deux Magots, the hotel offers its fast-lane guests state-of-the-art design for 700–2,200 francs (\$110–\$344) per night. La Villa, 29 rue Jacob, 75006 Paris; 43-26-60-00.



## CAFÉ CLASSIC

Handmade in France for one hundred years, Drucker chairs can be found in the finest restaurants—and on fashionable sidewalks—worldwide. From the popular Paris Café collection is (left) the Trianon chair, \$536. At T & K French Antiques, NYC, and Lyman Drake Antiques, Santa Ana.



## TRICOLOR TERRY

Start a riot at the beach with the Revolution towel (above), just one of seventeen festive patterns in the Descamps Plage collection of plush bath sheets, \$50–\$80, and robes, \$155–\$175. For Descamps boutique locations, call (212) 355-2523.

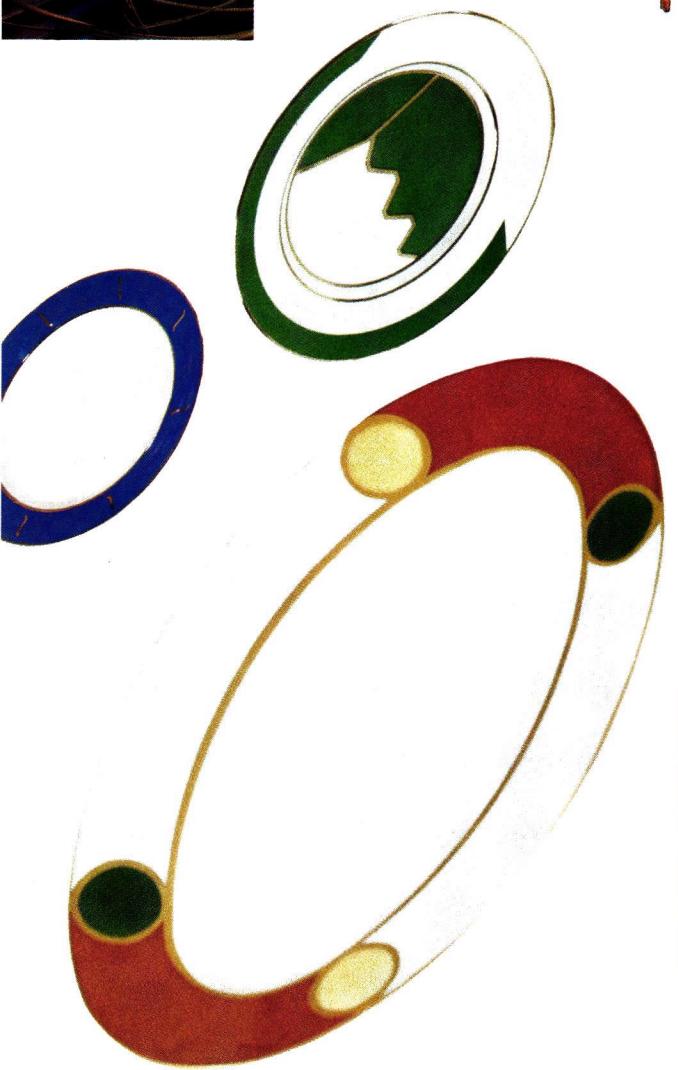
## REVOLUTIONARY WALLS

Françoise Dorget and Francine Royneau have a lot to smile about. Their latest Étamine boutique, which opened last year on the rue de Furstenberg in Paris, showcases Étamine's wallpaper line and selected fabrics. Based on commissioned editions from such design stars as Bonetti and Garouste, the Étamine collection also includes their own creations, such as À la Bastille (left), \$60 a yard, a Pierre Deux exclusive in the U.S. Other designs, to the trade at Boussac.



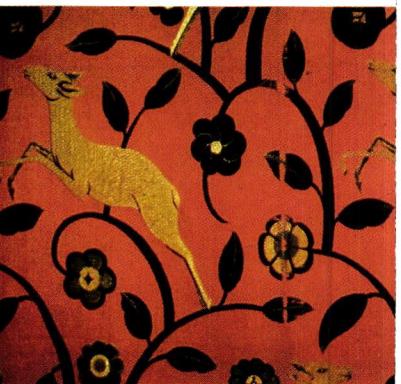
## PORCELAIN EYEPOPPERS

Jehan Darfeuille breaks away from traditional Limoges patterns with brilliantly colored plates, including (left, clockwise from top) the Africa dinner plate, \$63, Scarabée platter, \$55, and Iris dinner plate, \$47. To order, contact Jehan Darfeuille, Paris 46-45-85-85. Other designs available in the U.S., at Henri Bendel, NYC; Barneys New York; Stanley Korshak, Dallas.



## ENDURING STYLE

This year F. Schumacher & Co. celebrates a centennial of opulent textile design. Recently reissued are some of their most famous commissions, including (below) the 1930s Les Gazelles au Bois, \$102 a yard, for New York's Waldorf-Astoria, and Frank Lloyd Wright's The Imperial Triangle, \$57 a yard, for Tokyo's Imperial Hotel. To the trade at Schumacher; for nearest showroom call (212) 415-3900.



# NOTES

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# NOTES

## DESIGN

### McConnico Unlimited

The work of American designer Hilton McConnico can be found all over Paris  
By Peter S. Green

**W**himsical ideas just seem to tumble out of the mind of Hilton McConnico, the gentle Tennessean in Paris. With a humorous touch and unerring instinct he conceives designs that enchant, captivate, and sell. During his 24 years in France, McConnico has created sets and, sometimes, costumes for two dozen films (winning a César, the French Oscar), directed thirty television commercials, and designed a collection of couture dresses for Ted Lapidus, menswear for Yves Saint Laurent, and furs for Neiman Marcus. At present, his work can be seen all over Paris: he has crystal at Daum, foulards and porcelain at Hermès, and furnishings, rugs, and fabrics at Galeries Lafayette.

This fall, with Gilles Le Gall, his partner in the firm Titien, McConnico will refurbish a Paris métro station and, on his own, create a museum of horse racing at Longchamps racecourse in the Bois de Boulogne and a museum of the history of costume in Château Chinon, hometown of French president François Mitterrand. He will also design and direct Massenet's opera *Thaïs* on an island in the Nile.

Relaxed and debonair in white Reeboks, black Levi's, and a white shirt with a gray silk scarf knotted around his throat, McConnico sits in his airy cactus-filled apartment and studio high above the seventh arrondissement talking about Paris and Memphis, his hometown, in the soft accent of his youth.

He relates how, weary of designing gowns for society matrons and cotton queens, he sold his successful couture business in Tennessee and came to Paris in 1965 at age 22. When his money ran out after only six months, McConnico painted tourists' portraits at Montmartre but eventually landed

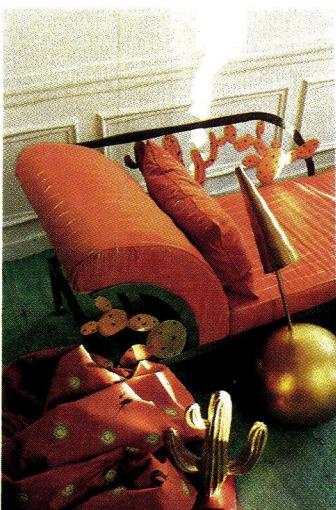
back in the world of high fashion, albeit in a different echelon.

The young expatriate was working for Yves Saint Laurent when he created his first film set at the request of his friend the director Bob Swaim. Soon McConnico was designing sets full-time for such leading directors as Jean-Jacques Beineix, François Truffaut, and Claude Chabrol. (American audiences probably remember his sets for Beineix's neo-New Wave thriller, *Diva*.) The highly visual world of set design was a natural place for McConnico to spread his wings. "I'm dyslexic, so I hardly ever read," he notes. "Growing up, movies were my books."

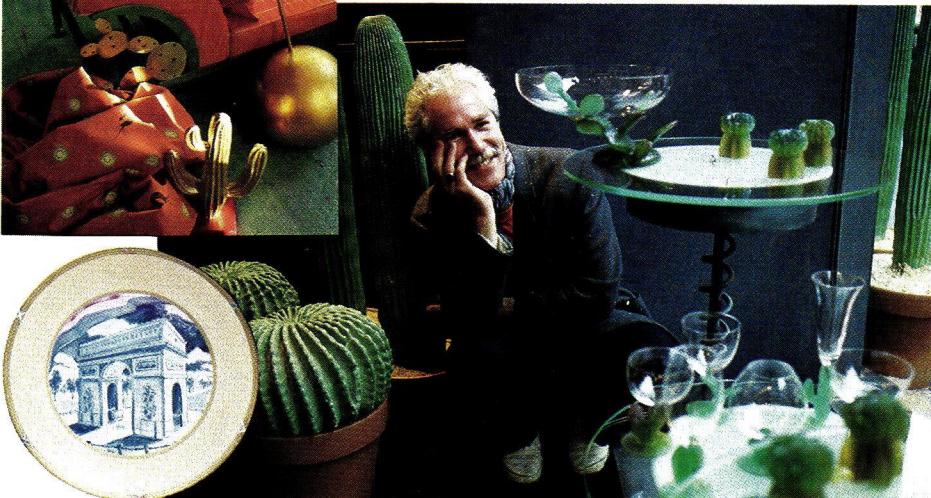
Winning the César as best art director for Beineix's *La Lune dans le caniveau* (*The Moon in the Gutter*) turned out to be a major punctuation mark in his career. "Just when I felt I had gone through movies and directing commercials, the [decorative arts] trade fair called MOVING asked me to be their *patron* [godfather] in 1985," says McConnico. "They gave me forty square meters at the entrance of the convention center to do whatever I wanted. I thought of opening a snack bar and selling hot dogs and Cokes. I thought I could make a fortune," he quips. Instead McConnico filled the space with cactus: a designer's concept of cactus, capturing its essence in lamps, plates, fabrics, and sculptures. He even interviewed a talking cactus on a videotape shown in front of a table setting as part of the display. "I had used cactus in some of my films," he explains. "It's a plant that is very unappreciated, and I'm frequently on the defense." McConnico's third collection of crystal for Daum again incorporates cactus in pâte de verre.

After years of building sets McConnico is a practiced hand at taking things one step beyond real life and infusing them with a sense of whimsy. When Hermès commissioned him to design a silk foulard for the bicentennial of the French Revolution, McConnico recalled the first tourist souvenirs he saw in Paris and impishly suggested a silk scarf with the motto "Souvenir de Paris" and a picture of the Eiffel Tower. Hermès chairman Jean-Louis Dumas-Hermès loved the idea, and the elegant spoof has won many customers.

A collection of home furnishings under McConnico's own label at Galeries Lafayette includes a daybed and a sofa with two one-armed chairs, all of bronze-lacquered iron with a small black cat resting among flat golden cactus along the back. His textiles feature



Hilton McConnico, below, with his pâte de verre and crystal cactus for Daum.  
Above and below left: Scarves and plates for Hermès. Left: Daybed, lamp, sculpture, and fabric.



J U L Y



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## NOTES

such designs as Rather Normal Kiwis with a Few Stray Shellfish and Cacti and Cats on Stripes with Spots.

McConnico's next major project takes him to the Chaussée-d'Antin métro station in the ninth arrondissement. His plans call for a huge painting on metal sheets bolted to the vaulted ceiling between two platforms. Covering an area 246 feet long and about 23 feet wide, "the painting will have about three hundred people in it. Lafayette in America with cactus and Indians and French soldiers. The center will be very baroque, and the sides very simple," says the designer.

His propensity for whimsy has not kept

*"When you're young,  
you collect ideas.  
Later in life, you  
rifle through the  
drawers and pull  
the ideas out"*

fellow design professionals from taking McConnico seriously. His cactus glasses for Daum are in the permanent collections of both the Musée des Arts Décoratifs and the Corning Museum in upstate New York.

In October McConnico will decorate a room in a Manhattan showhouse to benefit the American Hospital of Paris Foundation. Next spring the Brooks Museum of Art in Memphis will host a retrospective of McConnico's thirty-year career. "When you're young," he says, "you collect ideas even if you can't express them. Later in life you rifle through the drawers and pull the ideas out." As if to prove the point, his recent series of award-winning lamps for Drimmer (the first lamps McConnico has designed) are covered with small glass marbles, like the ones he played with as a child, holding them up to the sun and squinting at the light.

The thread of playfulness that runs through his work helps McConnico keep a sense of perspective. "As much as I can, I try to grasp my emotional fiber of the moment. I think it's very important to be passionate 24 hours a day. You have to take your work seriously," he says, "but not yourself." ■

JD

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ART

## SohO-sur-Seine

Artists storming the Bastille have changed the cultural map of Paris

By Justine De Lacy

**A**s the French celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the Revolution this month, the talk in the Bastille quarter, where some of its bloodiest events took place, is of a more recent revolution, one that is turning this long-neglected bastion of the working class into Paris's trendiest neighborhood. In the past ten years this run-down quarter once known for its seedy bars and furniture warehouses has been inundated by funky clothing shops with names like Violence et Passion and restaurants offering everything from haute Tex-Mex to perestroika posh (caviar and blinis). Some fifteen art galleries have opened, and about two hundred artists now live within a fifteen-minute walk, prompting comparisons with New York's SoHo. As real estate values soar, the French press has been talking about the second storming of the Bastille.

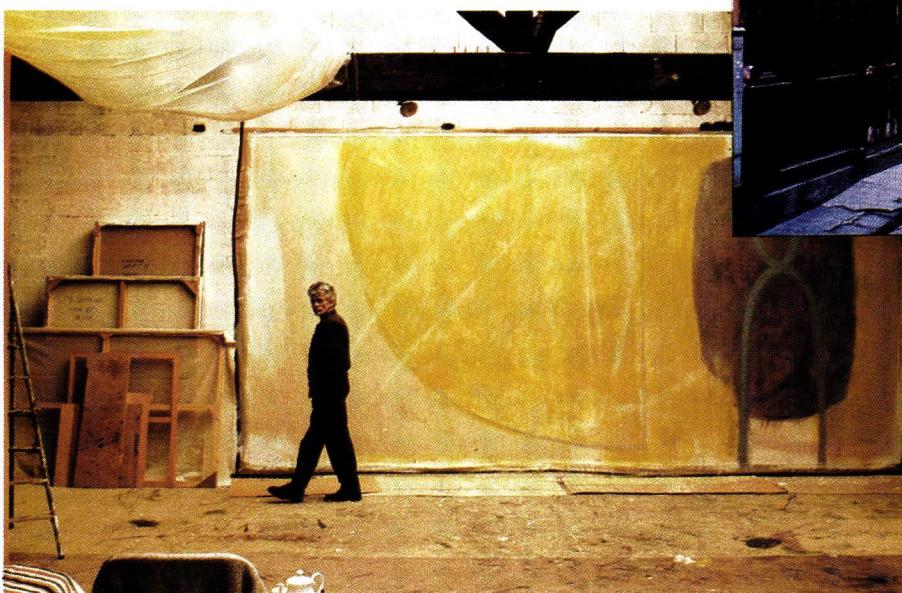
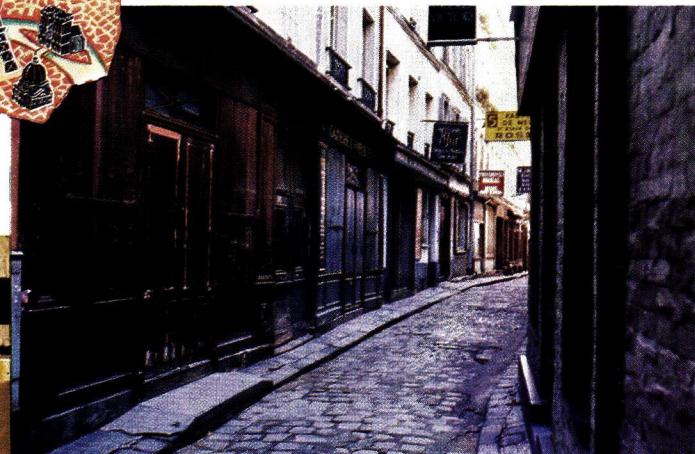
The government's decision in 1982 to build the controversial new Opéra on the place de la Bastille in what was then a cultural wasteland gave the area official consecration, bringing in fashionable architecture, design, and public relations firms. Hermès has a shoe atelier here, Jacques Hurel recently installed his leather goods workroom in a cabinetmaker's loft, and Jean Michel Wilmotte, who designed furniture for the new library in the Louvre, has studios nearby. This year the quarter's revolutionary heritage has added to its cachet. For it was here, in the workshops of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, as the winding streets east of the Bastille are collectively known, that the furni-

ture makers who dominated the area for three centuries plotted the uprisings that led to the revolutions of 1789, 1830, 1848, and the Commune insurrection of 1871. The barricades erected by the furniture makers of the faubourg were immortalized in *Les Misérables*.

The area's renaissance began in the mid 1970s when painters and sculptors evicted from ateliers in traditional art quarters such as Montparnasse began moving here, attracted by the large number of inexpensive workshops with good light. The workshops had once been inhabited by some of the most talented craftsmen in France; it was in the wings of the humble faubourg that the props of French grandeur were prepared for Europe's most opulent stage, the court at Versailles. Here, artisans cut the royal mirrors, stamped the royal velvet, and hand-appliquéd the royal wallpaper. Then the celebrated ébéniste du Roi André Charles Boulle, along with Leleu, Voisin, Migeon, Riesener, and Jacob, created some of the most beautiful furniture ever designed. In protest against the extravagance they had helped to create, the ébénistes would later fashion the props for another stage: the wooden stakes used to parade the heads of guillotined nobles through the streets.

Then in the late nineteenth century the industrial revolution accomplished what the king's troops had failed to do: it began to rid the capital of its working class. Unable to compete with furniture factories in the provinces, many artisans deserted the ateliers where their families had worked for generations. Dominique Thiolat, whose brilliantly colored, jubilant canvases are featured in Galerie Maeght's recently published *L'Art abstrait*, was one of the first artists to move into a furniture maker's atelier in the sprawling double courtyard at 5 rue de Charonne in 1976. Today seven artists have studios here, leading the French to call it a *ruche*, or hive, the name of the famous collection of Left Bank ateliers where Chagall and Soutine worked. Across the hall from Thiolat, painter Pierre Niviolet fashions bold abstract compositions. Downstairs, Christine An-

kaoua rebels against fashionable black and Minimalism with huge paintings in stark primary colors. Claire



The first art gallery in the Bastille quarter opened on the rue de Lappe, above, still the locale for dance halls and hearty Auvergnat cuisine that recall the area's working-class origins. Left: Painter Bernard Cousinier in his studio.

# 3

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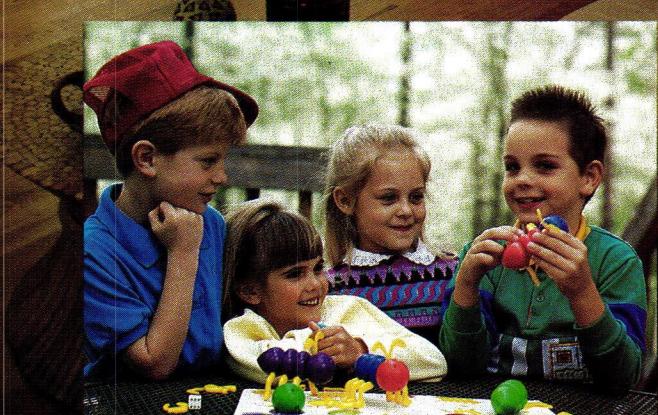
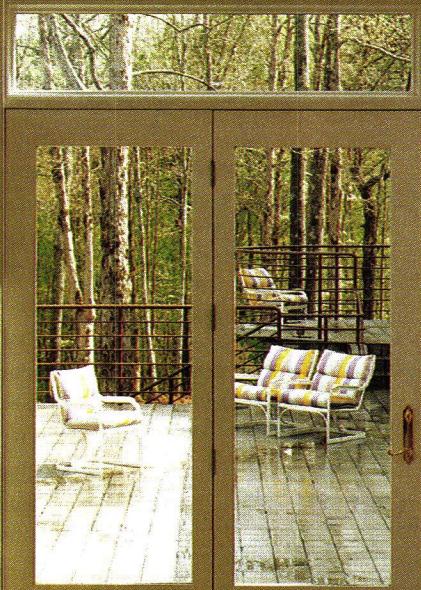
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# NOTES

Pichaud paints her canvases by rolling them out on the floor.

Not far away, at 71 rue du Faubourg-Saint-Antoine, sculptor Vincent Barré, a former architect, creates arresting forms in wood and metal. His most important group of works is an homage to Giotto, including the Annunciation. "There are no abstract polemics in my work, no games or decor or pleasantness," says Barré. "Just the sacred and the sensual. Very French!" At 37 bis rue de Montreuil, former stables said to have belonged to d'Artagnan, six artists work in what looks more like a three-story chicken coop than a hive. Paul Flury, a sculptor who teaches at the Parsons School in Paris, usually has several students chipping away at blocks of stone in his ground-floor atelier, where he has a fifteen-foot birdcage full of canaries to dull the din. Jean Chazy's studio nearby resembles a forest, with wood chips impaled on metal stems.

In 1982 Pierre Nivollet, Dominique Thiolat, and several other artists at 5 rue de Charonne held an open house of their work with the idea of luring customers to the Bastille from the Foire Internationale d'Art Contemporain (FIAC) held at the Grand-Palais. The Génie de la Bastille, in honor of the golden *Génie de la Liberté* statue atop the Bastille column, is now an annual event in which more than a hundred artists participate. Last year 20,000 people traipsed from atelier to atelier during the five-day open house, dubbed "le jogging artistique de la Bastille" by the French press.

Gradually bookstores, galleries, and experimental dance and theater companies followed the artists to the Bastille quarter. "When the bookstores opened, I was sure they'd close in a month," says Kate van Houten, an American painter who moved here from Montparnasse in 1970 with her Japanese husband, Matsutani. Today Matsutani, who came to Paris from Osaka in 1966 at the invitation of the French government, makes black on white paintings resembling giant Rorschach tests. His atelier is in the passage de la Bonne Graine alongside the furniture restorer Émile Gattoni and the café where furniture makers used to come for their noon chess game.

Despite the influx of new residents, some of the most tenacious and talented craftsmen have managed to remain. Jean Mocqué, at 95 rue du Faubourg-Saint-Antoine, reproduced the empress Joséphine's bed at Malmaison for a Far Eastern potentate. Master wood sculptor Jean-Pierre Lecouveour and his assistant, Michel Guillanton, are re-creating the garlanded ceiling of the Salon d'Apollon at Versailles for a house in Greenwich, Connecticut. Tieri Briet, a young painter, began working in wood because of the presence of

ébéniste Jean-Pierre Granier, who makes stage sets in his atelier upstairs. The two frequently have a sandwich together at the Café Lemaitre, a simple place run for years by a mother and daughter the artisans nicknamed *les mamies*.

Much of the faubourg's fascination today stems from this constant juxtaposition of artisan and artist, tradition and innovation. Yet many are pessimistic about how long the older and poorer residents can hold out. Since the decision to build the new croissant-shaped Opéra, which to many casts as oppressive a shadow over the neighborhood as the Bastille prison once did, real estate agencies have been advertising ateliers as *des lofts* at prices that neither artists nor artisans can afford.

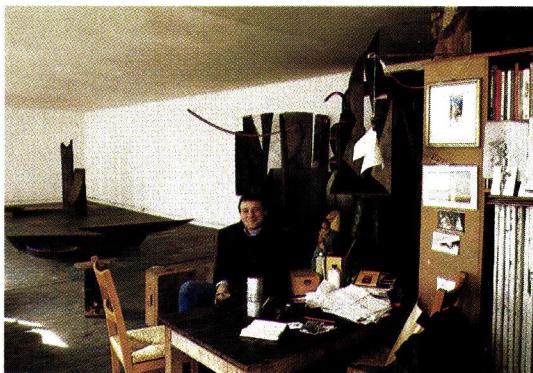
Laurent Wolf, a onetime sociologist who now makes his living from the miragelike futuristic cityscapes he paints in the atelier he affectionately calls his "box of light," was instrumental in getting artists the legal right to sell their atelier leases. Nevertheless, he is pessimistic: "It will give artists more money, but it won't keep them in the neighborhood. Prices are rising too fast." Wolf recently received his eviction notice for January 1990. Because of the new law, he is now entitled to an indemnity. "But there's no space left in Paris," he adds glumly. "Next stop is the suburbs."

Bernard Cousinier, the current president of the Génie de la Bastille, who produces huge panels of light and shadow in a hangarlike atelier in rue Daval, is determined to use the Génie as a lobby to defend artists' rights. "We want to make sure this doesn't become like SoHo, full of galleries and no artists." (For further information

on members of the Génie, their work, and exhibitions, telephone Bernard Cousinier at 43-38-34-55 or call the organization's secretary, Olivier Grasser, at 43-74-03-25.)

## TOURING THE BASTILLE

The rue de Lappe—long famous for its *bals musettes*, the old-fashioned accordion dance halls where the shopgirls of Paris came to find romance at tea dances, as well as for its hearty peasant food from the Auvergne—is the best place to witness the



Sculptor Vincent Barré, above. Left: Claire Pichaud's loft. Below: Dominique Thiolat converted a cabinetmaker's atelier into a studio. Bottom right: The rue de la Roquette.



O S B O R N E & L I T T L E



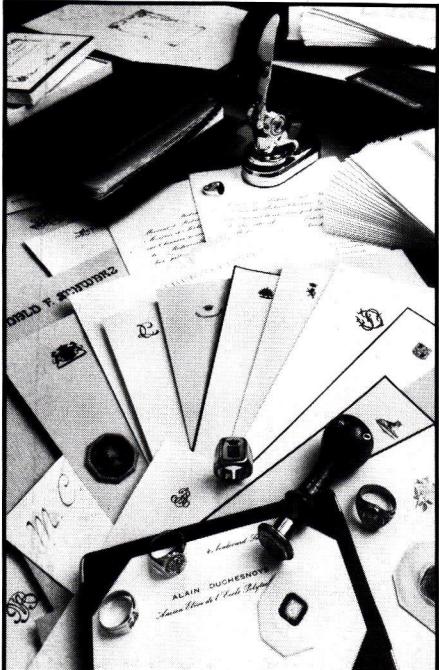
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## NOTES

striking contrasts in the neighborhood. In 1986 the **Balajo** (9 rue de Lappe)—the dance hall where Edith Piaf used to come with her lover, the boxer Marcel Cerdan—celebrated its fiftieth birthday. Habitues foxtrot to live bands and accordions in the afternoon; on Monday nights, le tout Bastille boogies and bumps to records ranging from Glenn Miller to Michael Jackson.

In the **Charcuterie Teil** (6 rue de Lappe), which has been run by Auvergnats since it opened in 1890, Josette Barrio still sells traditional Auvergnat hams and the local wooden shoes, or *galoches*, that hang on the back wall. The Auvergnat restaurant **La Galoche d'Aurillac** is a favorite with local workers for its hefty portions.

Once most Paris cafés had a percolator from the rue de Lappe, which specialized in making the trademark pewter counter (*le zinc*) found in all real Paris bistros. Today Madame Semetey runs the last of the old café equipment shops in the street, **La Maison André Semetey** (26 rue de Lappe). "There were 22 of us around the Bastille," she says wistfully as she sits knitting. "Now there are only three." Not far away, Madame Sacrispeyre's café equipment shop, **Berc Antoine** (12 Blvd. Richard-Lenoir), is where film companies go to reconstitute real Paris cafés. Jane Fonda bought a pewter counter for her house there.

**Tapas Nocturne** (17 rue de Lappe) is a Spanish tapas bar where the hip get tipsy listening to flamenco. A stark chrome and glass *nouvelle américaine* restaurant, **Le Cactus Bleu** (8 rue de Lappe) has taken the place of another beloved *bal musette*, La Boule Rouge.

**Galerie Claire Burrus** (30 rue de Lappe) is in a former nuts and bolts warehouse; Burrus, a respected art dealer, emigrated from Saint-Germain. The first gallery in the area was **Galerie Bastille** (20 rue de Lappe), opened in 1979. Owner Michel Faublée shows his own paintings.

Rue de la Roquette is the funkiest of the faubourg's main arteries. Once synonymous with the Grande-Roquette, the prison where inmates waited to be guillotined, it is now the headquarters of the black-leather and motorcycle set. **Rotonde Bastille** (17 rue de la Roquette) is the place to take it all in. Across the street the endearingly dilapidated bar **Truyère** (32 rue de la Roquette) looks like a set from *La Bohème*. **Lance Roquette** (53

rue de la Roquette) and the wine bar **1929** (90 rue de la Roquette) are popular with actors from the **Théâtre de la Bastille** (76 rue de la Roquette) where Jean-Marie Horde's innovative productions are partly subsidized by the city of Paris. Nearby is the **Café de la Danse** (5 passage Louis-Philippe), Catherine Atlani's avant-garde dance company.

The rue Keller now has five galleries, with more on the way. **Restaurant Café Moderne** (19 rue Keller) has a young hip crowd and a billiard table in back. **Le Petit Keller** (13 rue Keller; 47-00-12-97) is always packed with local artisans who like the copious 50 franc (\$8) menu of simple bistro fare. Another artisans' restaurant, with ébénistes' tools on the walls, is **Les Cinq Points Cardinaux** (7 passage Saint-Bernard; 47-00-89-00); the whole passageway is slated to be torn down. A very good simple 45 franc (\$7) menu is served at lunch, with more sophisticated fare on the 85 franc (\$13) evening menu.

At **Chez Marcel** (7 rue Saint-Nicolas; 43-43-49-40) bottles of Beaujolais and Muscadet appear on the table the second you sit down. You are charged according to how much you drink. Homemade terrines and sausage are specialties.

Two artist hangouts are **Le Pause-Café** (Coffee Break) (41 rue de Charonne; 48-06-80-33) and **Chez Paul** (13 rue de Charonne; 47-00-34-57). The Pause-Café has a variety of quiches and tarts as well as newspapers and magazines to read, maps of area galleries, and catalogues of local artists' current shows. Paul, beloved by many, retired last year, and though the food is overpriced and not as good, it remains a popular rendezvous.

Other recommended spots are **Sipario** (69 rue de Charenton; 43-45-70-26) for fine northern Italian dishes and **Mansouria** (11 rue Faidherbe; 43-71-00-16) for Moroccan cuisine. **L'Oulette** (38 rue des Tournelles; 42-71-43-33) is the best food for the money in all of Paris, with a 68 franc (\$11) menu at lunch, 105 francs (\$16) at night, for dishes as accomplished and delicious as those in many two-star restaurants. **Le Trou Gascon** (40 rue Taine; 43-44-34-26) serves superb southwest specialties.

**Bofinger** (5 rue de la Bastille; 42-72-87-82) is one of the most beautiful Art Nouveau brasseries in Paris. The first draft beer in Paris was poured there. ♦

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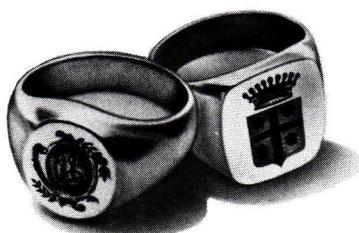
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# DECORATION

## Master of the House

Henri Samuel is the first and last word on French style at its grandest

By Martin Filler

**A**sk any decorator who his favorite client has been, and you're likely to be answered with a glassy stare and an uneasy smile, followed by an evasive reply that it would be *much* too difficult to pick *one* from all those fabulous people. But Henri Samuel has no problem whatsoever. "Oh, my three American girls, absolutely," says the doyen of French decorating without a moment's hesitation. "Jayne Wrightsman, Susan Gutfreund, and Nancy Richardson. They're amazing. Such energy. I don't know how they do it." They, of course, know how he does it—classic interior design of a quality and style that makes Samuel the last great practitioner of the grand manner that flourished before World War I.

He was born into a Proustian Parisian world in which fine objects and ample means were an expected part of life. Samuel's father was a banker, and his mother's father an antiques dealer. "I grew up surrounded by beautiful things, and as a child, I was always fascinated by them. I was supposed to be a banker, too, but instead became a decorator. I've always been able to mix lots of different things together," he admits, gesturing around the huge drawing room of his house just behind the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré. "But as you can see, this is not really very classical at all."

True enough. On the Pompeian red walls are hung bold pictures by Balthus, Miró, Jawlensky, Lindner, Hartung, and Lam. There are bronze tables by Diego Giacometti and startling sixties chairs of Plexiglas, brass, steel, and sealskin. Nonetheless, there are some very traditional precepts of scale, proportion, and placement at work here. Those Samuel learned from his legendary mentor, Stéphane Boudin of Jansen, the great Paris decorating house. "I was only at Jansen for five years, but I really learned the business there. For me, there was only Boudin. I owe him a lot. He could be difficult with people who worked for him, but I must say I was one of the very few he respected. He was incomparable at doing historic houses and also gave me the taste for Empire."

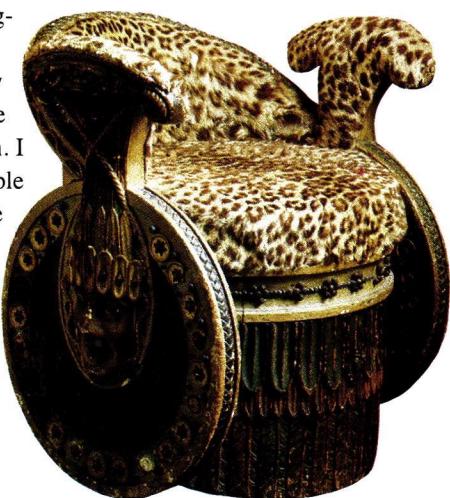
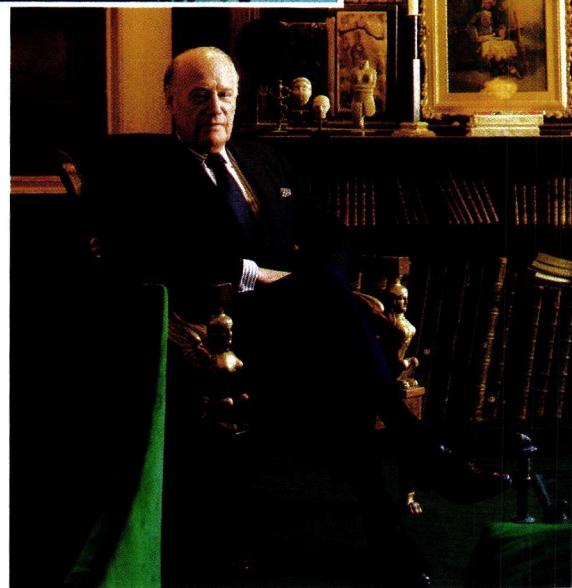
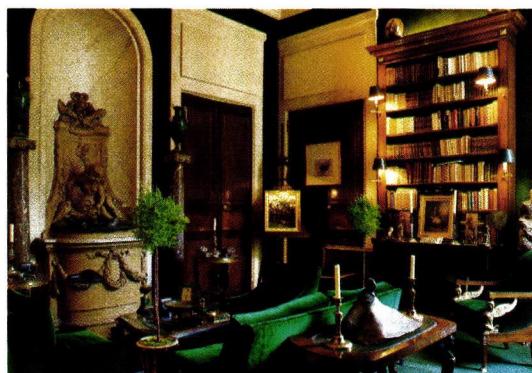
After Boudin's death in 1968, Samuel inherited some of his most important clients, including Charles and Jayne Wrightsman.

"Jayne has wonderful taste. She can spot the best piece the minute she goes into a room and buys only the highest quality. On the other hand, Susan Gutfreund can buy all kinds of things—rubbish, which can be absolutely marvelous, you know. When I say rubbish, it's exaggerated, but I mean pieces which are not great but are amusing, unusual. She has a lot of fantasy." His clients also typically have a lot of money. "Really, I don't think I'm more expensive than any other decorator and probably less than many. Still, I want to do perfect work, and anything perfect is expensive. But cheap work is much more expensive in the end because it doesn't last. And fine work is expensive, but cheaper because it lasts forever."

A few years ago Samuel contemplated slowing down. If anything, the pace quickened as he became a prime mover in one of his proudest efforts, serving as vice president on the committee for the restoration of the Musée Nissim de Camondo in Paris. "I wanted to semiretire, but I found out my clients would not let me. I've never been much interested in publicity, but there has always been a kind of mouth-to-mouth principle. When I did an apartment or a house and it was a success, it immediately brought others. I have more important jobs in America now than in France, no doubt because there's more money there. Also Americans move much more than French people do. Here, once you are in a house or an apartment, you live there practically your whole life."

Circling around the question of age, one at last asks Monsieur Samuel, who looks not a day over sixty, how old he actually is. "Oh, 85," he replies brightly. "But that's young compared to her," he says of his dachshund, Isadora, snuggled in his lap. "She's sixteen, which of course means she's really over a hundred." ▀

Henri Samuel, below, in the library of his Paris house, left. Below left: His taste for "amusing" oddities is typified by an Aztec-inspired French Empire chair on casters, c. 1805.



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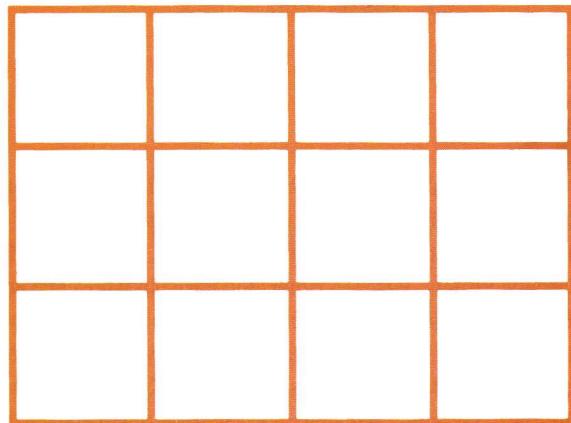
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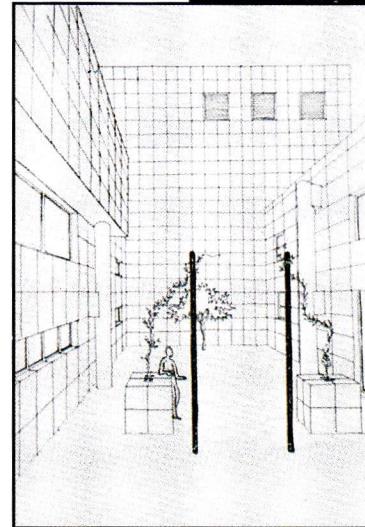
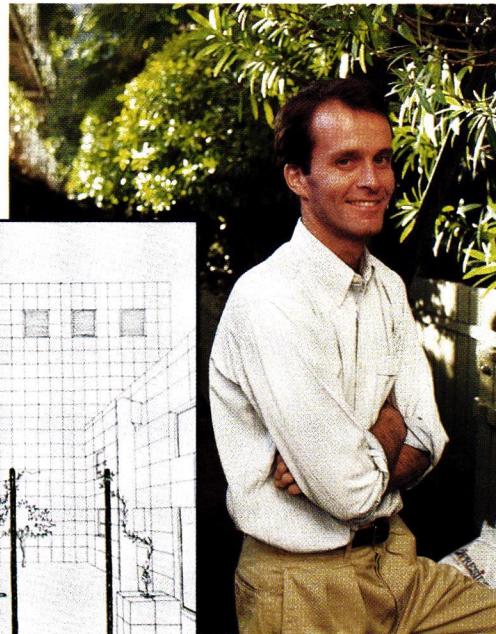
# GARDENING

## Green Geometry

Pascal Cribier sets the scene for the Bastille Opéra and other Paris gardens  
By Mac Griswold



Landscape architect Pascal Cribier, below.  
Below left: Wisteria planters at the Opéra. Left:  
Jennifer Bartlett's rooftop jardin potager.



and half the width of the space, its surface level with the pavers. "The gravel should look like a tide creeping up on the stones," says Cribier. An island of paving stands offshore, and on it grows a single flowering shrub, a *Buddleia alternifolia*. On dry land, five other buddleias sprout from the paving joints—nature rising.

Cribier is no stranger to the problems of creating urban public gardens, where such compression and abstraction are essential. Six years ago he worked with sculptor Claude Lalanne at the new Les Halles on the sunken children's gardens, cozy little hedged baskets of space brimming with surrealist treasures like topiary elephants as well as swings and slides. Although he has been in practice only since 1982, Cribier is one of five winners of a global competition to make exhibition gardens this summer at the Centre Pompidou. With his partners, François Roubaud and Patrick Écoutin, he has plans for a resoundingly orange field of 2,000 kniphofia crossed by a giddy catwalk leading to a rose purple clump of flowering Judas trees.

He designs private gardens, too. With the artist Jennifer Bartlett he worked out her rooftop garden full of herbs, vegetables, and flowers which convincingly uses the horizontal line of Parisian rooftops as landscape. A fat container bed of lavender intensifies the blue Parisian air. For former art dealer Nancy Gillespie and her husband, Sébastien de la Selle, he made a garden in their hôtel particulier courtyard, the same kind of bottom-of-a-well space as the opera gardens. The glossy leaves of broadleaf evergreens pick up every gleam of available light; the little jungle's uninhibited growth sets off the miniature wooden façade of what Gillespie calls a Palladian shed, surely the most elegant old utility building in Paris.

Two wisterias, six buddleias. These are indeed gardens of illusion—a French specialty for centuries. Potter Bernard Palissy's

**O**ases of calm in the middle of the Bastille Opéra uproar, the four little gardens hidden within the building itself are ready to join the lineup of interesting new landscapes that are part of Mitterrand's Grands Projets. Pascal Cribier, the Parisian landscape architect selected to design the opera gardens is, at age 34, perhaps the youngest and surely the least well known of the new wave of French landscapists such as Bernard Lassus, Alexandre Chemetoff, and architect Bernard Tschumi. All share a sense of geometric play that Americans are familiar with mostly through the works of Dan Kiley and the drawings of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.

Like everything else about the Opéra, the budget for the gardens has fluctuated like a fever chart in response to political ideology and fiscal crisis. But then, indeed, why should an opera house have gardens? In fact, they exist not for the public but for the opera personnel. This Mitterrandesque gesture is part of the original concept of a people's opera: providing culture for east Paris, traditionally a working-class district, as well as establishing an atelier, a workshop for artists and craftsmen. In 1986, when the conservative coalition came to power, the actual workshops were lopped. Naturally, given the vagaries of French politics, they have now been reinstated, in plan at least.

Cribier blithely outlines the problems facing him at the Bastille: "Besides virtually no money, there is no sun and, for now, no earth and no gardener." It's true that the garden sites, which are way above ground, are surrounded by walls three stories high and that the program calls only for containers. Cribier has nimbly jumped over these monumental drawbacks to create witty attractive outdoor effects. His minimalist work is refreshing to American eyes.

In the design for the Patio of the Dance, two large wisterias stretch up toward the light out of a pair of square pink stone containers that match the building. That's all. The vines reach out toward poles a few feet away, and that distance is crucial, magical. As many gardeners learn to their sorrow, wisteria grows with a jungle-like speed and power that can tear a house down, a power emphasized here by the leap Cribier invites the vines to make. "I always want to show that plants are stronger than anything else," he says.

In the Long Patio, a narrow stone-paved slot measuring 66 feet and bisected by a two-story "bridge," gravel runs the entire length

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## GARDENING

grotto gardens for Catherine de Médicis were full of faience frogs and snakes; André Le Nôtre's grand geometries have been called *les jardins de l'intelligence*; architect Robert Mallet-Stevens planted a garden at the 1925 Paris Exposition with Cubist-inspired cement trees when he couldn't find the right living topiaries. John Dixon Hunt, the eminent garden historian now at Dumbarton Oaks, says that the best of the new French landscape architects are "reintroducing into gardens the poetic, the intellectual, the conceptual." Cribier's simple designs, which have the strength of a good logo, are arresting

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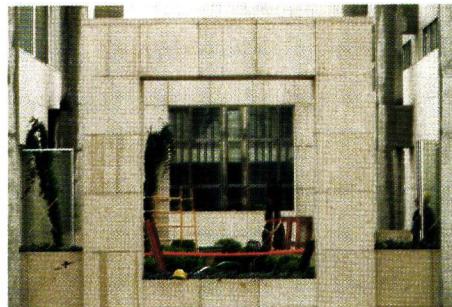
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*Cribier's minimalist garden designs celebrate the liveliness, the subversiveness of nature*



Garden in progress at the Opéra

because they celebrate the liveliness, the subversiveness of nature and the vitality and specific character of plants.

Cribier is also perfectly happy to use the commonplaces of French garden style. In his country gardens, for example, there are clipped yews and square parterre beds patterned with boxwood, bulbs, and bedding-out plants. Jennifer Bartlett, who loves working with him, as all his clients seem to, sums Cribier up when she says, "There's no idea that's too banal or too bizarre for him to follow through with enthusiasm." Paradoxically this is why his work looks so fresh: he's not afraid to employ any tactic so long as it precisely solves the problem at hand. ♦

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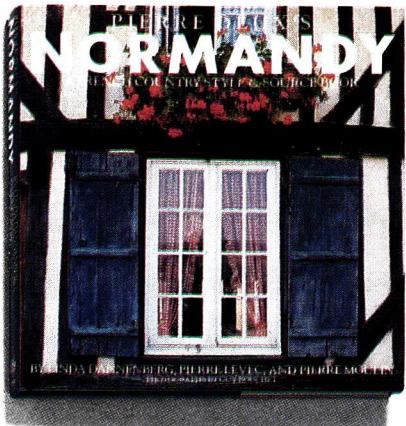


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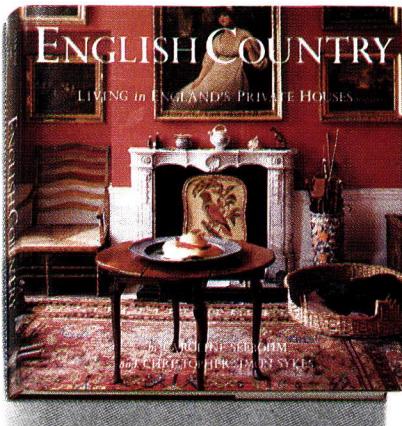
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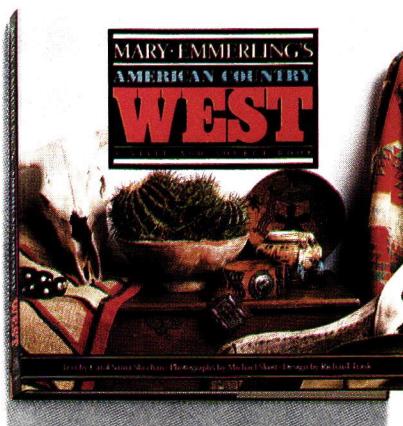
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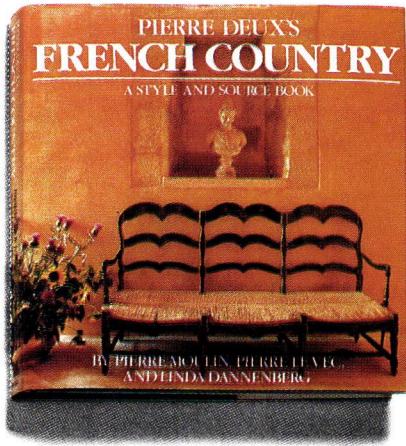
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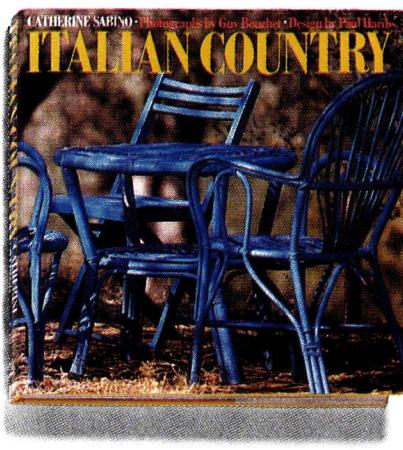
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# A Nation's Storehouse

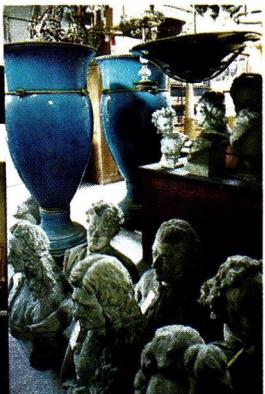
The Mobilier National supplies  
the official props of French grandeur  
By Patricia Corbett



**The Museum of Seating, above.**

**Top:** Empire clock. **Above:**  
**right:** Sèvres vases, marble  
busts, and Moderne lamp.

If the Smithsonian Institution can be termed America's attic, then the Mobilier National in Paris—the French government's central storehouse of furniture, tapestries, and objets d'art—qualifies not only as attic but cellar, linen closet, and toolshed combined. Although its premises in the scruffy thirteenth arrondissement are strictly off-limits to visitors, the Mobilier's holdings travel widely: both antique and contemporary treasures culled from its collections grace the presidential Palais de l'Élysée and ministerial salons in the capital as well as French embassies around the world. This year additional loans have been made to museum shows commemorating the bicentennial of the French Revolution: Princess Caroline Murat's mahogany and gilt-bronze bed and a silver and crystal table centerpiece by Puiforcat are currently on view as part of "L'Art de Vivre" at the Cooper-Hewitt in New York; for the blockbuster "Age of Napoleon," opening at the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute in December, curators will pitch Bonaparte's battle-scarred campaign tent lined with toile de Jouy.



On the home front, the Mobilier is responsible for devising a series of ephemeral Potemkin decors connected to Bastille Day festivities this month. Historic furnishings, both soft and hard, have been selected for the VIP grandstands on the parade route along the Champs-Élysées. Likewise, borrowed finery will temporarily transform the Industrialized Nations Summit Conference area in the spanking new Arche de la Défense as well as the austere Louvre Pyramide, where the heads of state are scheduled to lunch. In short, the Mobilier's business comprises anything that comes under the heading of *le prestige de la France*.

The peculiarly Gallic penchant for the preservation of order

is nowhere better exemplified than in the hangarlike storage areas, or *réserves*, wrapped around three sides of the Mobilier's central quadrangle. Small unmarked moving vans idle by the loading docks outside specialized *réserves* abloom with tags: chandeliers and candelabras cluster in the *lustrerie*, arras and damasks lie neatly furled in the textile department, serried ranks of gilt chairs crowd the *bois dorés*.

There is even the Musée des Sièges (Museum of Seating), misleadingly named since it is accessible only by special permission to top designers and craftsmen wishing to study its specimens of cabi-

network—including Napoleon's Quirinal Throne, left unfinished at the fall of the empire. Restoration ateliers handle all contingencies, from reweaving to de-termiting. Farther-flung possessions include the Gobelins, Savonnerie, and Beauvais tapestry workshops and the lace ateliers at Le Tuy and Alençon. Despite technical adviser Chantal Gastinel Coural's claim that "we aren't curators," the Mobilier's 400-strong staff manages a rotating stock of some 200,000 historic chattels according to the most stringent museological standards. Here, housekeeping is raised to an art form.

Though the origins of the Mobilier can be traced back as far as the fourteenth century, its direct ancestor was the Garde-Meuble de la Couronne (the furniture repository of the crown), founded in 1663 by Louis XIV's finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert with a mandate to collect "precious furnishings" for the royal palace at Versailles. Since the magnificence of a monarch's abode was deemed

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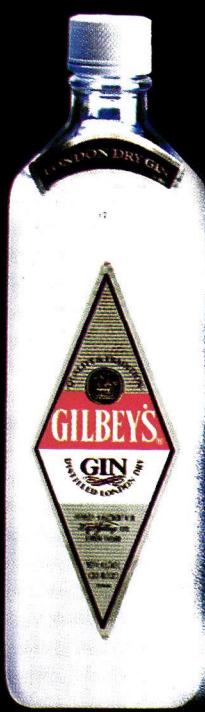
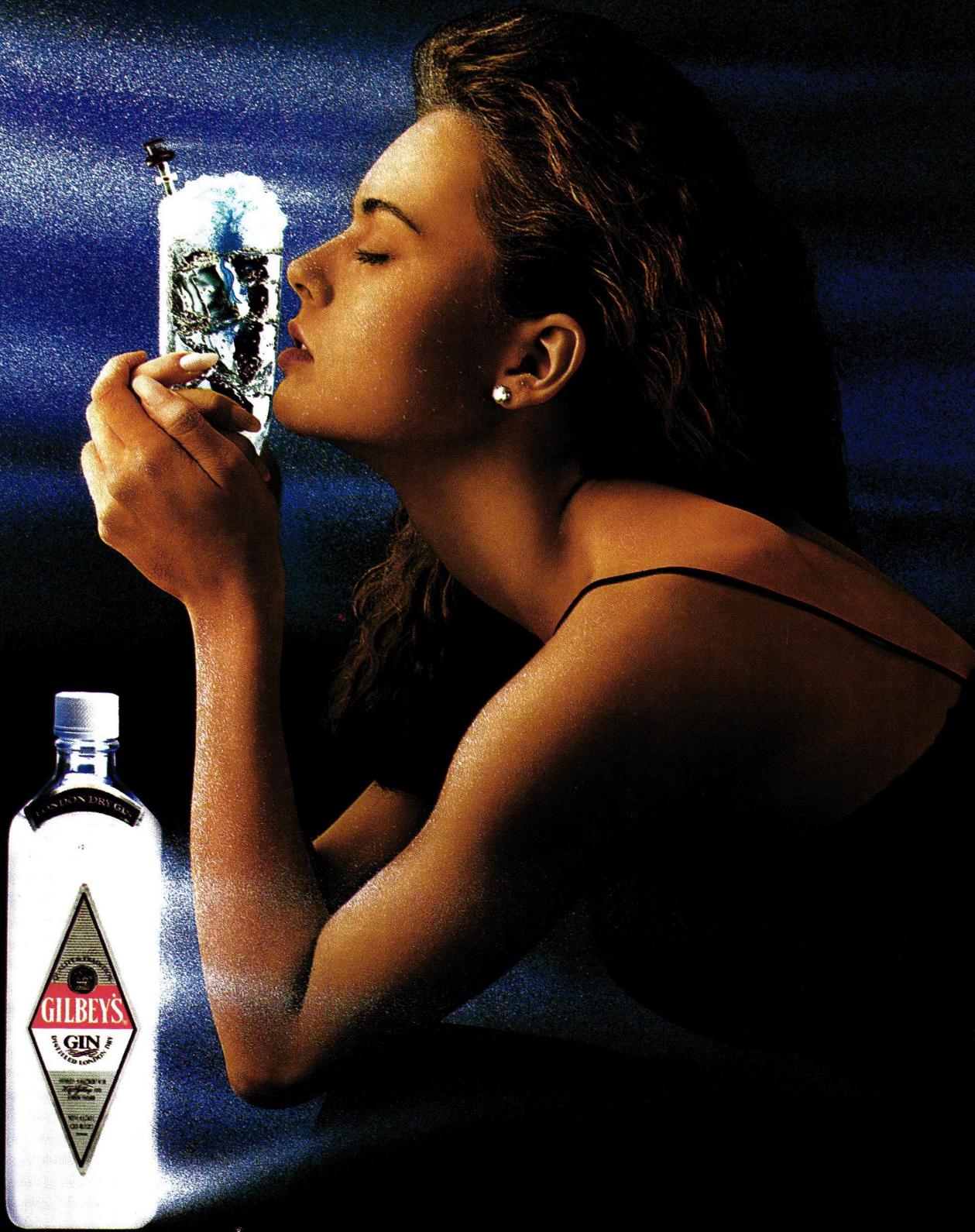


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# CLASSICS

directly proportional to his prestige, questions of interior decoration were treated with the same urgency and gravity accorded matters of state. Colbert, a haberdasher's and banker's son whose frugal streak tempered the Sun King's prodigality, instituted a commonsensical stewardship in vigor to this day. "It is not enough to spare no cost in amassing fine things," Colbert admonished. "It is necessary to provide for their security and conservation."

Inventories and journals, the earliest of which date to 1666, duly record the daily life—the creation and acquisition, comings and goings, damage and repairs—of each stick of furniture, each scrap of silk. Sometimes the underbelly of a great historical event is uncovered: a laconic entry for two square tents of cotton ticking reads "lost at Waterloo."

This tradition of good husbandry has served the Garde-Meuble well, especially during the Reign of Terror: it was one of the rare relics of the ancien régime to survive the downfall of royalty in 1792, albeit sadly depleted. With an eye to the nation's prosperity, if not to posterity, revolutionaries publicly auctioned off valuable holdings to finance purchases from foreign commodity suppliers. The vandalism stopped only when the newly crowned Napoleon, in a rush to refurbish his imperial residences, resurrected the special relationship between ruler and Mobilier. (Today the president's is the only request for a loan the Mobilier will honor if the pieces in question are pre-1800 furniture or later, museum-quality works such as a sprightly suite of chairs upholstered in Beauvais tapestry designed by Raoul Dufy in the 1920s; lesser dignitaries must usually make do with lesser objects.)

More than any other chief of state since, Napoleon left his personal mark on the institution—perhaps as subtle revenge for having once been snubbed by a Mobilier inspector general who advised the lowly citizen Buonaparte "to be content with the lodgings assigned [him] and use [his own] furnishings." The gist of the emperor's instructions was to "buy new, not old," and he took a maniacal interest in the minutiae of decoration. Harried administrators reported that His Majesty found the curtains at the Palais des Tuilleries "too bare and too simple," that he desired absolutely "no fringe on the furniture in his apartments," and that "silk or dimity slipcovers" must be run up instantly to protect the most valuable effects.

**Napoleonic throne, right.**

**Top right:** Catalogued  
passementerie. **Center:** A  
1950s chandelier under  
cover, 19th-century  
bisque figurines, and an  
Empire gilt candelabra.



As in all proper households, dirty laundry at the Mobilier is not washed publicly. We do learn, however, that General de Gaulle wasn't terribly interested in the decorative arts but when pressed would admit to a (predictable) preference for the Empire style. Pompidou offset a taste for modernity by choosing eighteenth-century pieces of royal provenance to decorate the ground floor of the Élysée. Giscard felt most at home in a Neoclassical environment, while Mitterrand has invited contemporary *créateurs* to design suites for his office and living quarters.

Just as the Mobilier of another era commissioned one-of-a-kind pieces from the likes of Jacob, Desmalter, or Groult, today's administration cooperates closely with the megastars of French design: Paulin, Starck, Wilmette. The high-tech state-of-the-art Research



Center for the Creation of Contemporary Furniture builds and tests prototypes which eventually make their way to the international marketplace. Philippe Starck's Pratfall seat (produced by Driade) and his Richard III armchair (Baleri) were first intended for *le président*; the originals of the Theater of the World cabinet (XO) and the Miss Dora chair (Disform) are in Danielle Mitterrand's apartments; the Série Lang (Driade) replicates the Minister of Culture's office furniture. "The Mobilier adapts traditional crafts techniques to the industrial context," Starck explains. "And there are delightful little ceremonies, like the indexing of each model in those historic ledgers, which seem to sanctify the piece even before it has become reality. Come to think of it, almost everything I've worked on at the Mobilier is now a worldwide best-seller."

Jean Michel Wilmette, designer of many of the interior fittings for I. M. Pei's glass pyramid at the Musée du Louvre, is convinced that his sleek new museum showcases would never have seen the light of day had it not been for the Research Center experts' zeal. "Their aim is to turn contemporary designs into the heritage of future generations," he says. "Their pursuit of perfection guarantees even the most challenging project a final unmistakable note of sophistication." A note synonymous, of course, like the Mobilier National itself, with the very essence of French style. ♦

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# Taste of the Provinces

From Alsace to Brittany, France's country restaurants provide a taste of diversity

By Patricia Wells

**N**othing revives one's spirits, opens one's eyes, restores one's faith in the Frenchman's ability to "do it right" like a weekend in the French countryside. While Paris has Paris, the rest of France has a wealth of regional personalities to share. From the Brittany coast to the eastern Alsatian borders, from the château-filled Loire to the earthy and golden southwest, each region of France offers travelers a look at a distinctive way of life, a special style of regional food, and, of course, a new selection of wines for each and every meal. As ever, when traveling, it is the people one meets that make all the difference.

The following are some personal suggestions for authentic regional restaurants with a personality, each with its own guest quarters.

## ALSACE

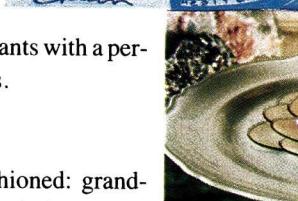
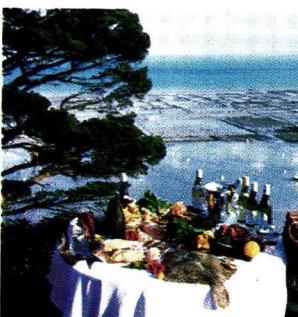
It seems almost too idyllic, too old-fashioned: grandmother tends to her confitures, father to his fruit, vegetable, and flower garden, while the son, ambitious and youthfully restless, takes charge in the kitchen. It wouldn't work for everyone, but for the Alsatian Husser family of the **Hostellerie du Cerf** in Marlenheim, it seems not only right and natural, but essential.

A pleasantly restored Alsatian-style auberge complete with paved courtyard, an abundance of flowers, and authentic country charm, the Hostellerie du Cerf is idyllic in more ways than one. Who can imagine touring Alsace without making contact with sauerkraut, headcheese, apple strudel, or a bright chilled Riesling? Clichés, you say? Not here.

At this cozy auberge, a quick fifteen-minute drive east of Strasbourg, father Robert Husser and son Michel have cleverly and expertly managed to take what is essentially a hearty peasant fare and

update and transform it for a modern elegant table. Nothing is lost in the translation. In fact, the Husser family create new respect for the regional foods that have been banalized by an excess of familiarity.

*Presskopf* (Alsatian headcheese) and *tarte flambée* (a warm cream, bacon, and onion tart) appear as miniature palate teasers. The traditional appetizer of *harengs à la crème* is transformed into a bright, sparkling, and compact terrine: layers of fresh herring, potatoes, and cornichons are surrounded by a contrasting and elegant *crème de caviar*. The *choucroute nouvelle au cochon de lait et foie gras fumé* is a model of its kind: a mound of tender, gently fragrant



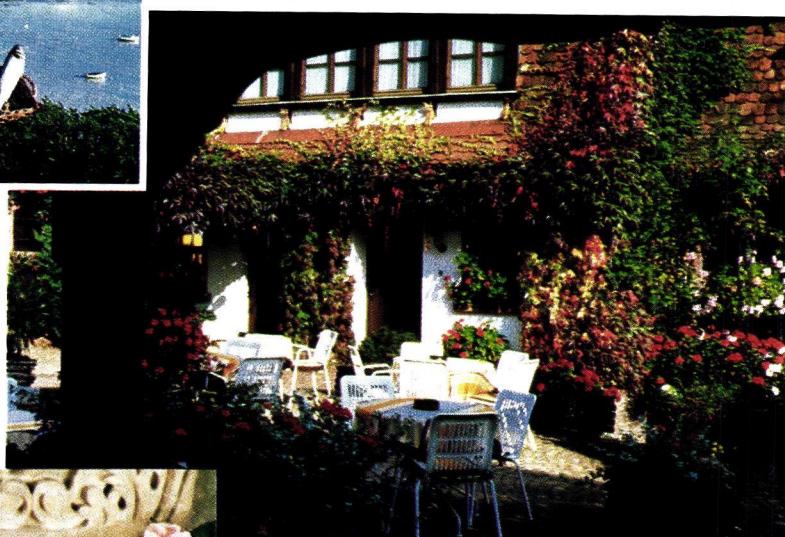
From the menu of Grand Hôtel du

Lion d'Or, above, in the Loire. Center:

Map featuring Puymirol. Top:  
Restaurant de Bricourt in Brittany.



Les Crayères, left,  
is in the heart of  
champagne country.  
Below: Hostellerie  
du Cerf in Alsace.  
Bottom: L'Aubergade  
in the southwest  
of France.



sauerkraut is surrounded by delicate home-smoked foie gras and earthy morsels of tender pork.

Robert and Michel Husser have stretched their imaginations but offer a style of cooking that is neither overly sophisticated nor unnecessarily fussy. The Hostellerie du Cerf wine list is a veritable bible with an emphasis on the new generation of independent Alsatian winemakers. In short, this is one of the finest and most up-to-date tables in Alsace, with a welcome as warm and as large as the entire Husser family. (Hostellerie du Cerf, 30 rue du Général-de-Gaulle, 67520 Marlenheim; 88-87-73-73)

## RECIPE #3: Tailgate Picnic

### "Dijon and Herb Marinade"

1/2 cup white wine vinegar

1 bottle champagne

1/4 cup GREY POUPON®

Country Dijon Mustard

1 clove garlic, mashed

1 polo match

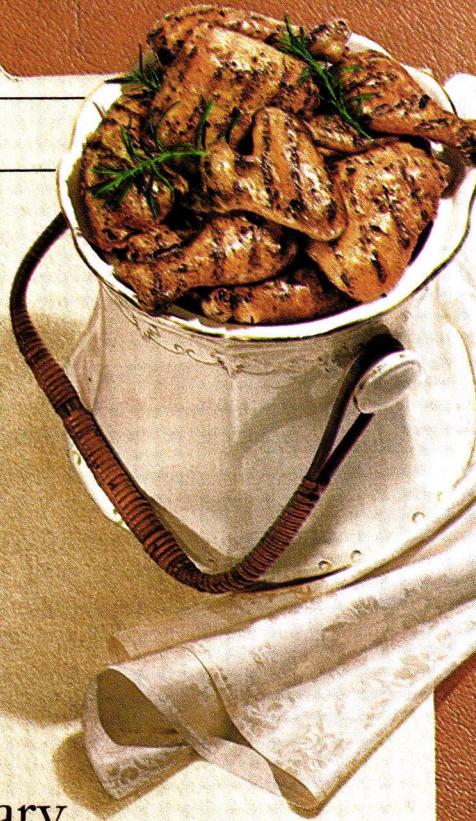
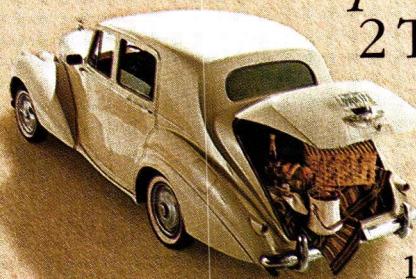
2 Tbsp. minced

fresh onion

1 rules book

1 tailgate to Rolls

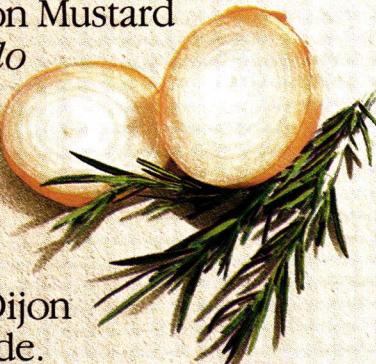
1/4 tsp. crushed rosemary



Combine Grey Poupon Country Dijon Mustard with other ingredients. Set out appropriate polo clothing. Marinate chicken 45 minutes.

Arrive fashionably early for the polo match

nearest you. Grill chicken until golden brown, bringing out full flavor of Grey Poupon Dijon and Herb Marinade.



Take one last look at polo rules book. Pop cork on champagne. This properly signifies the opening of any important tailgate picnic. Make it clear that you'd rather be playing than watching.



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# Beyond the Louvre

Surprising discoveries await visitors to France's most recherché museums  
By Gregory Rowe

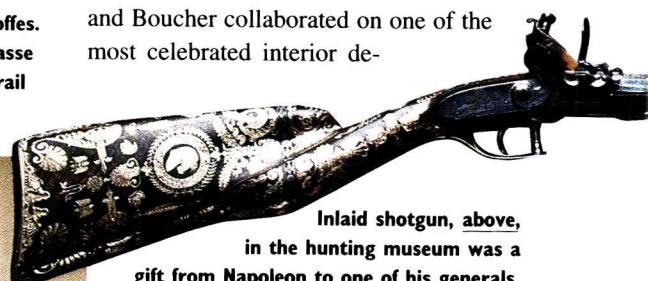
**C**onscientious curators of their history, the French have established museums of every variety with diligence and passion. The *Guide Bleu* guide to museums enumerates scores of institutions in Paris alone, ranging from the vast Louvre to an Edith Piaf Museum in two rooms of a private apartment, a classic example of the *musée intime* the French regard as one of life's small pleasures. For travelers in search of the past preserved in an intimate setting, the following is a personal selection of lesser-known but uncommonly rewarding museums in the capital and farther afield.

## MUSÉE DE LA VIE ROMANTIQUE

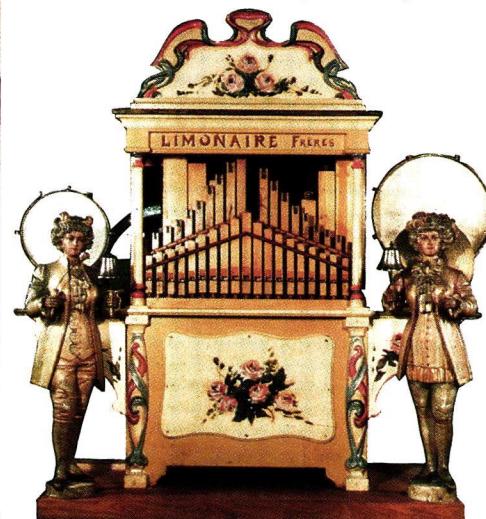
Improbably sequestered behind the honky-tonk of Pigalle at the end of an allée of trees, this former hôtel particulier was the setting for two of the most illustrious artistic and intellectual salons of nineteenth-century Paris. The Dutch painter Ary Scheffer, who acquired the house in 1830 and whose descendants lived there until 1983, held Friday-night gatherings for friends such as Chopin, Liszt, Lamartine, and George Sand. Later, Scheffer's grandniece, Noémie, welcomed the elite of the Third Republic. Now, appropriately, the museum hosts small changing exhibitions on the cultural milieu in which the famous residents of the house and their guests played major roles. Permanent exhibits include some of Ary Scheffer's own paintings. On the ground floor, contemporary decorator Jacques Garcia has painstakingly replicated the salon of a nearby house, now demolished, where George Sand held court in the 1830s. Outside, landscape designer Alain Richert has re-created a Romantic garden



A fabric swatch left, from the Musée de l'Impression sur Étoffes. Below: At the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, even a stair rail commemorates the hunt.



Inlaid shotgun, above, in the hunting museum was a gift from Napoleon to one of his generals. Below: A 1905 carousel organ from the Musée de la Musique Mécanique.



of the 1830s complete with Charles X garden furniture. During the summer, tea is served outdoors and in a greenhouse. (16 rue Chaptal, 75009; 48-74-95-38)

## MUSÉE GUSTAVE MOREAU

Not far from the Scheffer museum is the house where Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau lived and worked. Moreau, who taught Matisse and Rouault, bequeathed the place to the state when he died in 1898, with a request that his 11,000 drawings, watercolors, and paintings remain intact. Inside the studio-residence, you can almost imagine the artist watching from behind one of several self-portraits. (14 rue de la Rochefoucauld, 75009; 48-74-38-50)

## MUSÉE DE LA CHASSE ET DE LA NATURE

At first glance, this seventeenth-century hôtel particulier designed by François Mansart looks as if Teddy Roosevelt might have had a hand in the decoration. Stuffed rhinoceros, stag, and moose heads peer out from the walls and antler chandeliers hang like thorny crowns. The actual founders of the museum are Jacqueline and François Sommer, who renovated the dilapidated hôtel and its formal garden in the 1960s to create a home for their collection of big-game trophies and memorabilia of the chase. Considering the grislier aspects of venery, the paintings, tapestries, sculptures, and drawings inspired by the sport are disarmingly beautiful. In these surroundings even guns and powder pouches take on the grace of delicate objets d'art. (60 rue des Archives, 75003; 42-72-86-43)

## MUSÉE DE L'HISTOIRE DE FRANCE

A wedding surprise from the prince de Soubise to his wife, the his and hers apartments at their palace exemplify the best of Parisian Rococo. Under the direction of architect Germain Boffrand, artists Natoire, Van Loo, and Boucher collaborated on one of the most celebrated interior de-

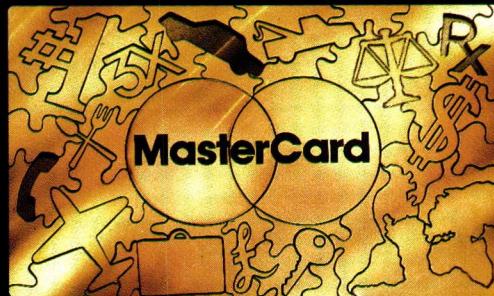
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sign projects of the day. Since 1808 the National Archives have been filed away in the palace and annexes. Documents such as Napoleon's will, the Bill of Rights, and the Edict of Nantes are on display. (Write in advance for an appointment: 60 rue des Francs Bourgeois, 75003; 40-27-60-00)

#### MUSÉE DE LA MUSIQUE MÉCANIQUE

In this tiny museum tucked beside the Centre Pompidou, intricate mechanical musical instruments are brought back to life. Owner Henri Triquet and his daughter Jacqueline have restored everything from a 1905 hand-painted carousel organ to a 1924 *piano automatique* inset with very late Art Nouveau-inspired glass. The mechanical mannequin who "plays" the 1933 pneumatic jazz accordion is accompanied by an automated drummer straight from a period bandstand. (Impasse Berthaud, 75003; 42-78-49-16; Open Sat.-Sun., 2-7 P.M.)

#### MUSÉE ERNEST HÉBERT

The paintings of nineteenth-century artist Ernest Hébert share the spotlight with the ar-

chitecture of the building devoted to his work, the 1743 Hôtel de Montmorency, which retains much of its Louis XV decoration. Hébert's *paysagiste* renderings of peasants going about their labors—executed during his years in Rome as director of the French Academy—are shown with his better-known Orientalist scenes and haunting portraits. The more mystical canvases make one understand why Hébert's cousin the novelist Stendhal once wrote, "Perhaps that young man does have a soul." (Hôtel de Montmorency, 85 rue du Cherche-Midi, 75006; 42-22-23-82)

#### MUSÉE INGRES

Set in a brick palace built in 1664 for the bishop of Montauban, the museum overlooks the Tarn River north of Toulouse. Galleries on the piano nobile display in rotation over 4,000 drawings and 60 paintings Ingres gave to his native city of Montauban. Many of the drawings record the evolution of the artist's classical compositions. On the ground floor are sculptures by another native son, Émile Antoine Bourdelle. (19 rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, 82000 Montauban; 63-63-18-04)

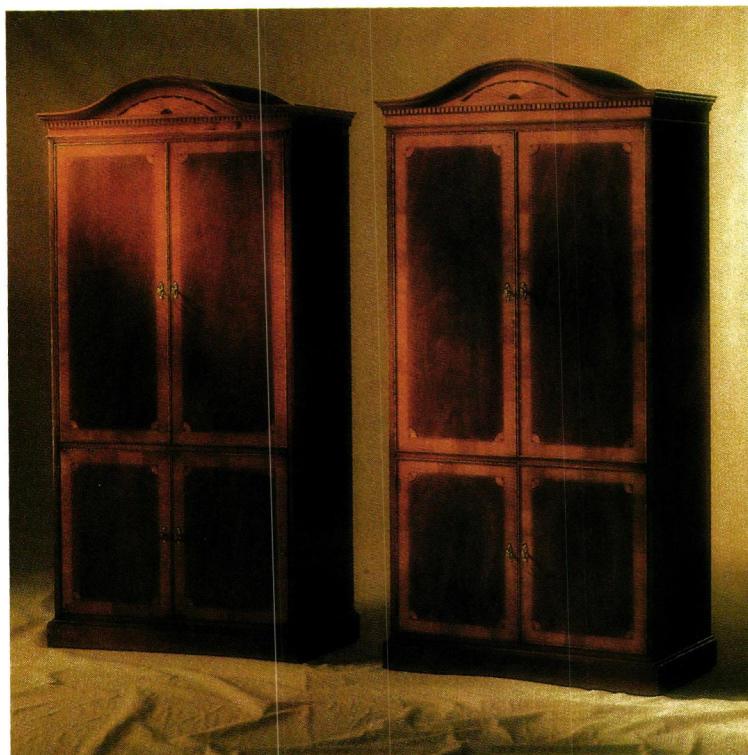
#### MUSÉE DE LA PARFUMERIE

##### FRAGONARD

Flacons, *nécessaires de toilette*, and artwork on display in a converted eighteenth-century tannery in Grasse recall 3,000 years of perfume history. A walk just outside the hillside town affords an opportunity to pick the jasmine, rose, lavender, and orange blossoms from which perfumes are made. (20 blvd. Fragonard, 06130 Grasse; 93-36-44-65)

#### MUSÉE DE L'IMPRESSION SUR ÉTOFFES

The Alsatian city of Mulhouse has long been the fabric-printing capital of the world, so it's fitting that the only fabric-printing museum is situated there. Printing machines, carved woodblocks, and rollers are used for step-by-step demonstrations. Indonesian batik, French toile de Jouy, English chintz, and other fabrics are always on view. The most exciting aspect of the museum, however, is the library. Three million swatches of different fabrics are catalogued in 1,600 bound volumes—an incomparable resource for designers. (3 rue des Bonnes-Gens, 68100 Mulhouse; 89-45-51-20) ▀



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# EDITOR'S PAGE

J U L Y 1 9 8 9



**I**t is nothing for an American to admit to a passion for France, so I will immediately confess to mine. And while I'm at it, I'll add that for years the fact that something was French seemed to explain more than adequately almost any state of perfection. The bicentennial of the Revolution offered a delightful opportunity to indulge my Gallic inclinations, especially since I was joined by like-minded colleagues, in particular Deborah Webster, HG's very own American in Paris and a gifted stylist with both judgment and access. HG finds France today a country intriguing in its stylistic contradictions. Our survey ranges from the eighteenth-century grandeur of Paris's Musée Nissim de Camondo to Mattia Bonetti and Elizabeth Garouste's *dernier cri* design for couturier Christian Lacroix's new shop on the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré. We visit with Irène Amic at her Provençal country house in the flower-scented hills near Grasse, stop by the half-timbered retreat of investment banker Nicholas Worms in Normandy, and enter the very private rue de Rivoli domain of renowned editor Marie-Paule Pellé. There's also Edmund White's illuminating profile of Jacques Grange, the

French decorator known not only for his *bon goût* but also for his dazzling roster of clients and friends, from Yves Saint Laurent to Isabelle Adjani and Catherine Deneuve; Jane Kramer's incisive examination of that most highly cultivated French faculty, taste; Martin Filler's look at the Grands Projets—President François Mitterrand's bid for glory; and I can't forget to mention Charles Ganté's scoop—the first house designed by Philippe Starck. In July, HG offers all this and much more—articles on little-known museums, hard-to-find decorative resources, and, of course, shopping and food tips—not only for those who are lucky enough to have travel plans but also for those who simply have wanderlust.

*Mary Woronov*

Editor in Chief



# ON THE RUE DE RIVOLI

*Marie-Paule Pellé lives  
with the visual flair  
that is her signature*

---

By CHARLES GANDEE

Photographs by ALEXANDRE BAILHACHE

**I**t is frequently said in certain publishing circles in New York, Paris, and Milan that Marie-Paule Pellé has the "best eye in the business." By that, admirers of the veteran creative director's work mean that Pellé is a master of visual seduction—that she can fashion photographs, capture images, produce stories that no one else can quite seem to match.

To those outside the editorial circles that hold Pellé in such high regard, her talent, indeed her profession, must seem a bit elusive, a bit rarefied. To those inside, however, to her colleagues and competitors, her talent means the critical difference between a poetic and a prosaic picture, between a three-dimensional and a two-dimensional page, between a memorable and a forgettable magazine.

Although at present Pellé is focusing on

**M**arie-Paule Pellé strikes a pose in the Palais-Royal, right. Her evocative tricorne and Paco Rabanne costume recall the ultrafashionable Incroyables of the late 18th century. Far right: Back at home Ouzo awaits his mistress in the entry where a patriotic Per Spook wedding dress and a pair of wooden evergreens modeled after artist Timothy Hennessy's tree sculptures supply Pellé's trademark touch of whimsy.







In the sunshine-yellow living room a Louis XIV-period portrait looks down on family heirlooms and the collected spoils of Pelle's lifelong assault on the flea markets and antiques shops of Paris. The sunburst clock and armchair—designed to conceal a chamber pot—are late 18th century, as is the folding iron daybed that serves as the sofa. Gilles Crosland painted the trompe l'oeil screen. The faux parquet wool carpet was custom-made to Pelle's specifications.





"You can't live in history—I find it extremely boring even if it's perfect"

introducing a fashion section to the pages of *Condé Nast Traveler*, for the majority of her 26 working years interior decoration has been her subject of choice. *Marie Claire*, *Vogue Décoration*, *Décoration Internationale*, and HG have each benefited from her famous eye and inimitable flair, as has filmmaker Roman Polanski, who invited her to design the set for his only television commercial.

Pellé came to the City of Light after leaving the lycée in Orléans just before final exams—"I hate failure"—and, in whatever cities she has lived since, has almost always owned her various apartments. She became a *locataire* but once, a few years ago, and then suddenly last year she awoke one morning in the grip of an alarming feeling familiar to city dwellers everywhere: "What am I doing throwing all this money through the window every day?" Because Pellé is not a woman to dally once she makes up her mind, it was merely a matter of weeks before she was packing to move from the grand apartment she rented overlooking the Luxembourg Gardens to the not-so-grand apartment she bought tucked in behind the tacky souvenir shops and duty-free perfumeries lining the rue de Rivoli's great nineteenth-century arcade.

Given Pellé's reputation, it is with considerable curiosity that one peers into the private rooms that the ultimate stylist recently styled for herself in Paris. "I'm like a decorator," she notes. "When I enter a place, it inspires me immediately. I use everything I know to feed the place, and then my personality follows." Two examples

A round 18th-century armoire anchors a faceted corner of the living room, left, where two 18th-century Italian bronze bas-reliefs crown a pair of doors. A 19th-century English mahogany chair supports a plaster Giacometti lamp and a photograph by André Ostier of a fête at the country house of Charles de Beistegui. Opposite: The Directoire-style cups and saucers were specially commissioned by Pellé's mother in the forties from Le Vase Étrusque. Details opposite, from top: A zinc cornice ornament; an 18th-century globe clock from Alain Demachy's Galerie Camoin; a bolero of roses by florist Olivier Pitou hanging on the garden wall; a stone bust of Louis XIV.







will amplify the self-assessment. For her pied-à-terre in Manhattan, she opted for a cool minimalist aesthetic. The two-bedroom apartment in a somewhat flashy sixties-modern midtown high-rise is all but empty, relying almost entirely on a heart-stopping panoramic view of Central Park for its glamorous urbane character. "A dancer could live there," she quips.

At the other end of the stylistic spectrum, her country retreat near the French wine-growing town of Sancerre might safely be described as maximalist. Pellé confesses that she bought the tumbledown nineteenth-century mansion because it was pink, and then filled it to the attic with antique and flea market furniture because she wanted to create the impression she "had been living there for centuries."

**N**either tack seemed right for the new apartment on the rue de Rivoli. Particularly since the modest two-bedroom flat is home to her children, sixteen-year-old Simon, a student, and twenty-year-old Charlotte, a successful fashion model. "When I came to this apartment in this great eighteenth-century building, I knew I had to respect it," recalls Pellé, who manifested that respect by looking to the same period for her decorating direction. "Everything is very French," she notes. "My other places have mixtures of things from around the world, but here I decided it would be logical to keep it almost exclusively French."

However overwhelmingly French her apartment may be, Pellé resisted the easy format of absolute historical accuracy. For every Louis XIV bust, Louis XV portrait, and Louis XVI console, for every period chandelier, screen, and table, she has countered with some quirky twist—a custom-made faux parquet wool carpet in the living room, for example—that reveals the true contemporary vintage of her decora-

**P**ellé transformed the tiny courtyard off her kitchen into a verdant mini oasis because she missed her former apartment's view of the Luxembourg Gardens. Deployed throughout the garden are such ornamental curiosities as, from left, a turn-of-the-century zinc clockmaker's sign, a lead mannequin's head from the twenties, and a reflective glass ball from Austria intended to frighten birds away from flower beds.



**A** studied vignette in the kitchen, above, includes a chocolate fish on a Louis XV pewter plate, a stuffed hen roosting in a basket, and a wine jug in the shape of a pig.

Right: In the living room another Pellé still life includes a turn-of-the-century terracotta cupid and lion, a contemporary vase by Yves-Marie du Mortier, and an 18th-century silver candlestick.



tive scheme. "You can't live in history," she explains. "I mean some people do, but for myself I find it extremely boring even if it's perfect."

Given the livelier aesthetic fare she has to offer, Pellé's aversion to boring perfection is understandable. For example, in her foyer, painted a classic shade of bourgeois gray with—what else?—crisp white wood trim, two hand-painted wooden trees stand like grinning footmen at the door, announcing the lighthearted leitmotif that is Pellé's signature. In the living room, painted a luminous shade of yellow to compensate for its lack of natural sunlight, wide-eyed visitors have a range of idiosyncratic visual delights to choose from—an ad hoc drawing-paper shade casually curled around a white plaster Diego Giacometti lamp, an enticing bowl of glass candy lovingly arranged on a rough-hewn picnic table, a provincial hand-carved chair covered with Marimekko fabric.

**T**he one regrettable aspect of Pellé's new apartment was the absence of either a garden or a garden view. "I come from the country," she explains. "I can't give up green. I have to get green—it's a sickness." The ground-floor apartment did, however, have a narrow slice of land just off the country-style kitchen, a narrow slice of land which jaded New Yorkers might call an air shaft but which the more romantic Parisians would term a courtyard, and she wasted no time in transforming the tiny plot into a miniature Eden of bamboo trees and potted flowers. Even here, outside in the garden, her playful decorative hand is in evidence. On a perforated iron chair off to one side sits a lead mannequin head from the twenties which originally served as a hatstand.

Though there's much to look at in Pellé's minuscule garden, the view is basically legerdemain. Her guests must content themselves with the view from the kitchen, where she has been known to crowd as many as sixteen around her rustic vineyard table for dinner. Like the rest of the apartment, the kitchen is a constantly changing still life that Marie-Paule Pellé rearranges like a visual menu. Here too the style is predominately French, but she notes, "I can't say that this is the style I like the most because I like a lot of styles. I'm like a chef, you know what I mean, someone who enjoys many different tastes because they are able to cook them." ♠



**G**uests gather around a folding vineyard table from Bordeaux under the painted wood chandelier in Pellé's kitchen/dining room. A Charles X Neo-Gothic iron vitrine hangs above the sideboard. The Louis XV chairs are from Pellé's family; the stools are from the 1930s.



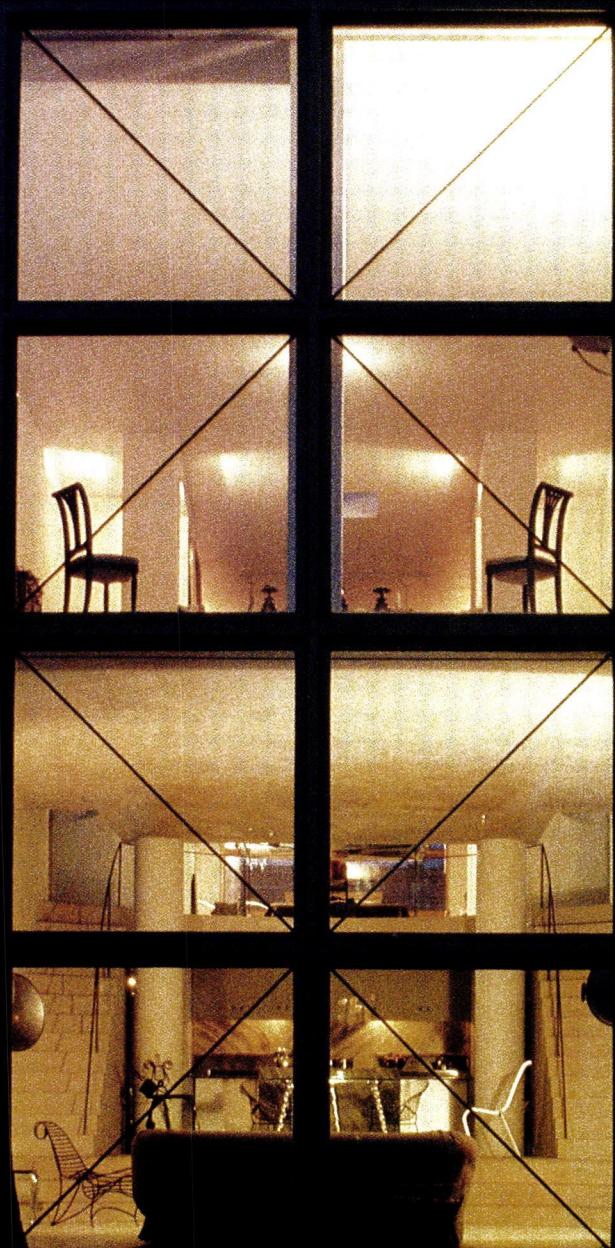
# STARCK MODERN

*Philippe Starck makes  
his architectural debut  
with a dramatic  
house on the Seine*

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*By CHARLES GANDEE*

*Photographs by DEIDI VON SCHAEWEN*



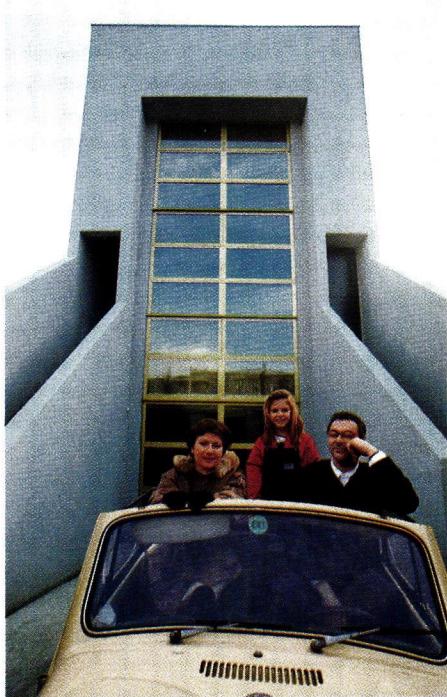
The Le Moult house rises defiantly above the Seine on the tiny Île Saint-Germain. Opposite: Nine-year-old resident Praline Le Moult contemplates her goldfish in the marble kitchen.



*Though the house is small, Starck wanted it to be “aristocratic,*



*more like a castle—everything is very noble”*



**L**ike P. T. Barnum, Billy Rose, and Régine, Philippe Starck is a showman. He's big and he's loud and he's very very full of himself. "Oh, zee Concorde," France's most flamboyant designer likes to say, rolling his eyes back in dramatic anguish. "Zee body is in New York, yet zee mind, zee mind is still in Paree."

But if Starck possesses such habits as routinely describing his work as "Incredible!" and his state of being as "Perrfect!" he also possesses a remarkably prolific talent. Who else can flaunt a portfolio that contains luggage for Louis Vuitton, lighting for Flos, pasta—yes, pasta—for Panzani, silverware for Sasaki, crystal for Daum, water bottles for Vittel, cookware for Alessi, and furniture for a trio of

**T**he Le Moult family, above, in the driveway of their new trilevel house. Left: Inside, designer Philippe Starck opted for spatial grandeur over material richness and for an open plan over discrete rooms. Living, dining, and sleeping areas are defined by level changes rather than walls. The corkscrew-leg dining table and aluminum dining chair are both by Starck. The strip-steel Spine chair in the living area is by French expatriate André Dubreuil, now based in London. Details see Resources.



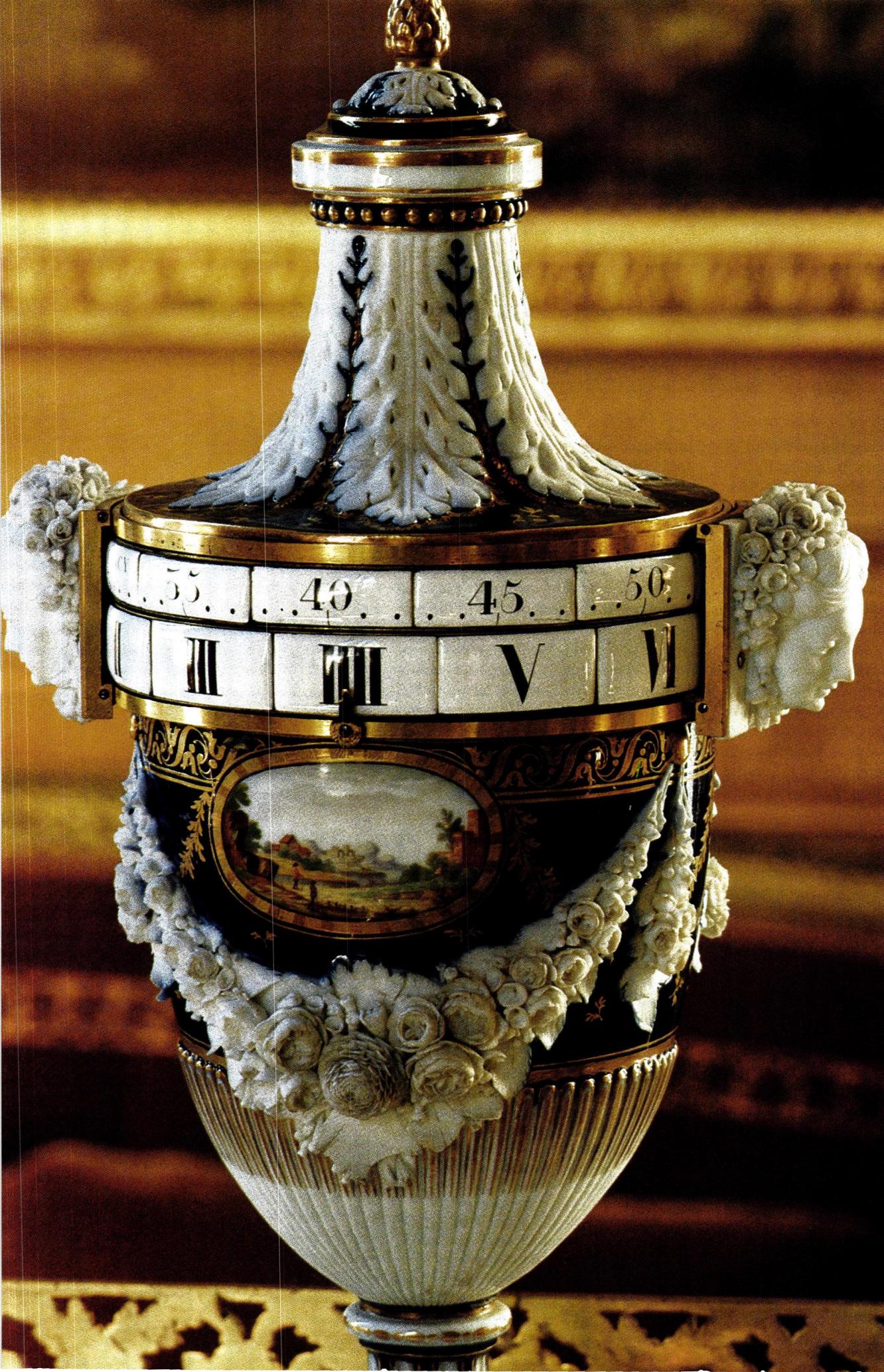
*In a quiet Paris quartier, the newly restored Musée Camondo commemorates a passionate collector of eighteenth-century furniture and objets d'art*

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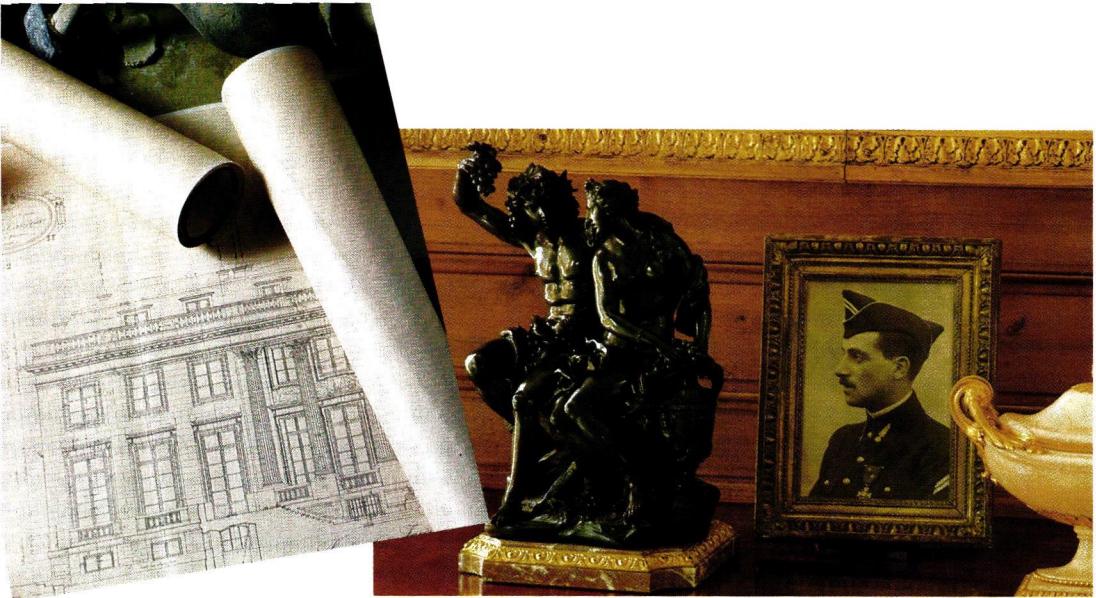
*By MARTIN FILLER*

*Photographs by JACQUES DIRAND*

# LEGACY OF SPLENDOR



In the entry hall of the Musée Nissim de Camondo, opposite, a gray-painted Louis XVI sofa covered in Aubusson tapestry beneath a painting of flowers in a vase, French, c. 1760. The renovation of the entry hall was a gift of Henri Samuel. Left: Among the highlights of the museum is this urn-shaped cylindrical clock of Niderviller porcelain, c. 1785. Stylist: Jacques Dehornois.



Sophisticated collectors are fond of saying that they're not really the owners of the things they possess, only their temporary custodians. That is about as close as most people come these days to acknowledging the ancient maxim *ars longa, vita brevis*. Yet there are a few evocative interior settings—rarely in conventional museums—where that timeless truth can be fully appreciated. One such place is the Musée Nissim de Camondo in Paris, one of the world's great repositories of eighteenth-century French decorative arts. The long-needed restoration of this Belle Époque hôtel particulier has just passed its halfway mark, but it is already being rediscovered as a treasure house on a par with New York's Frick and London's Wallace Collection.

More than just a ravishing assemblage of objects, the Musée Camondo is also a haunting memorial to a distinguished family. They met with extinction just three decades after moving into this mansion filled with masterpieces created for the equally doomed aristocrats of the ancien régime. Around the turn of the century, Comte Moïse de Camondo, a Jewish financier, became intensely interested in the art and furniture of France under Louis XV and XVI and began to collect it with extraordinary passion. Camondo was already the owner of an ornate Second Empire residence at 63 rue de Monceau in the eighth arrondissement. A stickler for historical accuracy, the count decided that those florid surroundings were inappropriate for his growing commitment to eighteenth-century classicism. Camondo thereupon commissioned the architect René Sergent to tear down his palatial house and replace it with a more suitable design loosely based

on Jacques-Ange Gabriel's Petit Trianon for Louis XV at Versailles.

From the outset, Camondo worked with Sergent in devising precise spaces to receive specific pieces from his collection. The count was especially partial to pairs—of chairs, commodes, vases, candelabras, paintings—and thus symmetry played a major part in the arrangement of the new rooms. Methodical person that he was, Camondo amassed a veritable checklist of works by all of the most important names in furniture design of the *dix-huitième*: Carlin, Jacob, Lacroix, Leleu, Oeben, Riesener, Roentgen, Sené, Van Risenburgh, and Weisweiler. There is also important silver by Roettiers, metalwork by Gouthière and Thomire, tapestries after Boucher, sculpture by Clodion and Houdon, and paintings by Drouais, Duplessis, Guardi, Huët, Lancret, Lavreince, Oudry,



**D**etails of a treasure house. Clockwise from top left: Drawing of Musée Camondo, 1911–14, by architect René Sergent; next to French 17th century bronze, a photo of Comte Moïse de Camondo's son, Lieutenant Nissim de Camondo, killed in battle in 1917; Louis XVI fauteuil in the count's bedroom; 1781 portrait by J. S. Duplessis of Jacques Necker, Louis XVI's finance minister; silk curtain by Prelle with passementerie by Bernard Gomond in the Grand Bureau, restored as a gift from Baron Edmond de Rothschild; fauteuil by Jean-Baptiste Sené, c. 1775–85; ormolu-mounted petrified-wood covered vase attributed to Pierre Gouthière, c. 1780–90, and once owned by Marie Antoinette; bolserie in the Grand Salon, restored as a gift from Michel and Hélène David-Weill.





Robert, and Vigée-Lebrun.

Camondo intended this brilliant array as a legacy for his beloved son, Nissim. But in 1917, only three years after the house was completed, the 25-year-old Lieutenant Nissim de Camondo was killed in action during an air battle with the Germans. After he lost his son and heir in World War I, the count decided to leave his mansion and the treasures in it to the Union des Arts Décoratifs as a museum. Comte de Camondo died in 1935, but the sadness does not end there. During World War II his daughter, Béatrice, and her husband, the composer Léon Reinach, remained in Paris

rather than flee abroad. In the waning months of the Nazi occupation they and their two children, Fanny and Bertrand, were arrested and shipped off to Auschwitz, where the entire family perished.

**A**fter the war the Musée Camondo was forgotten by all but a few eighteenth-century enthusiasts. This faded jewel in a no longer fashionable neighborhood fell into greater and greater disrepair, the only government funds being available for its exterior maintenance. Finally a small group of collectors, antiques dealers, and decorative arts

scholars banded together in 1985 to form the Comité Pour Camondo to raise funds for the desperately needed refurbishment of the interiors and repair of the superb furniture and objets d'art. Patrons, both public and private, have underwritten the renovation of entire rooms. Manufacturers have donated materials and craftsmen and restorers have exercised their talents in what can only be described as a collective labor of love.

Although infusing an unoccupied house with a living spirit is a difficult thing to do, the restoration of the Camondo mansion has achieved just that. Its tactful and deli-

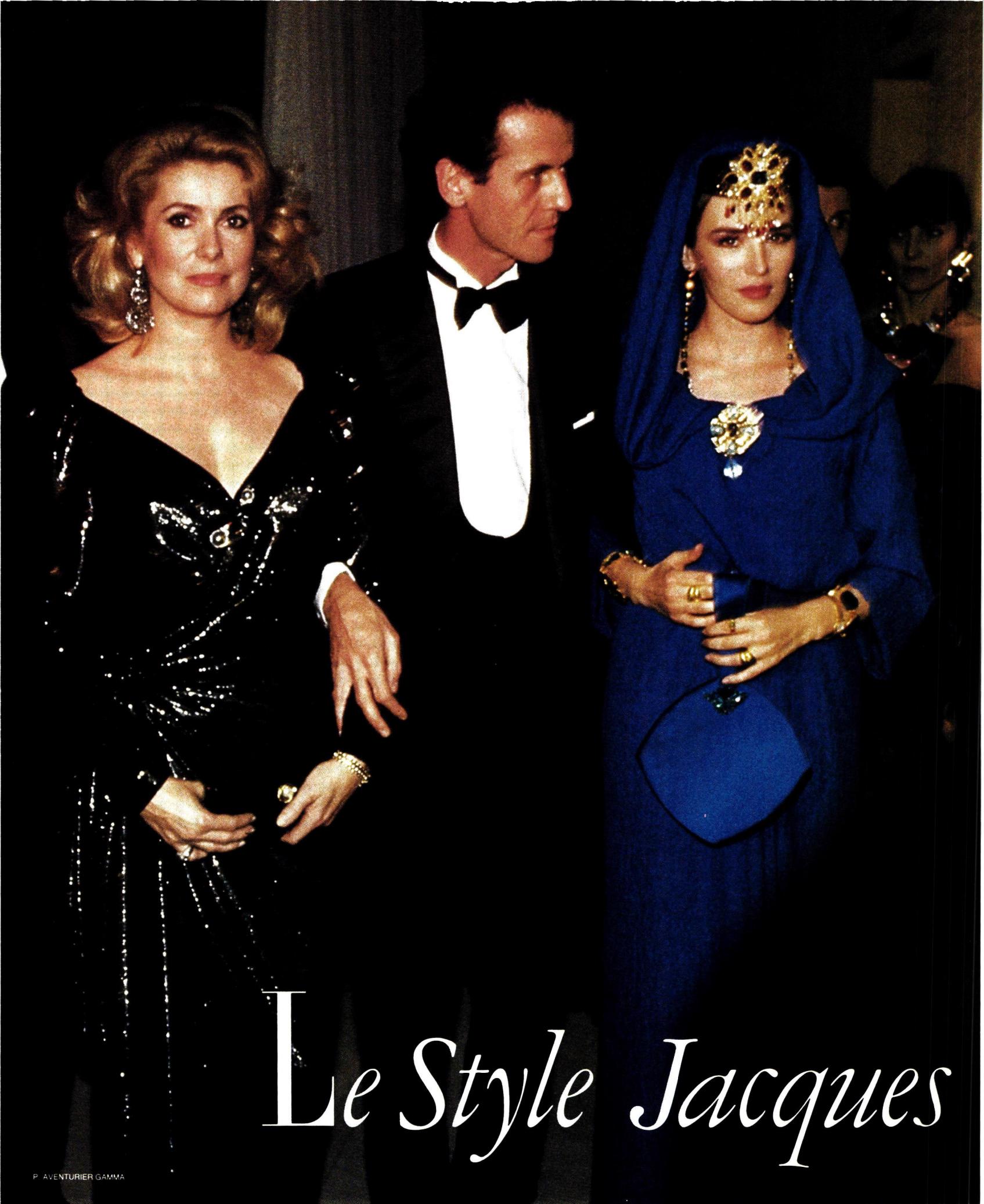
**Bacchanale**, left, a terra-cotta sculpture by Clodion, 1770. Far left: In the Petit Bureau, restored as a gift from the Honda Motor Co., a bedside table c. 1775–80, with a gardener in marquetry epitomizes the intricate craftsmanship of a master ébéniste, Charles Topino. Carpet, with an oval central medallion, is an Aubusson, c. 1790.



cate balance between preserving the past and re-creating it for the present gives this singular museum far more than charm. This is a house that speaks eloquently of how the things we possess in turn possess revealing aspects of ourselves. The Musée Nissim de Camondo is a poignant elegy as well as an exhortation to enjoy daily life to the fullest. The glorious treasures that inhabit its grand salons are not the mute trophies of mere wealth. Rather they bear witness to the love of life of their last private owner and the love of family which prompted his generous gift to France. ♠

*Editor: Deborah Webster*





# Le Style Jacques

**Y**es, I'm very French," Jacques Grange admitted, lying on his sofa in a bathrobe, barefoot, with his dog on his lap. It was ten thirty in the morning, the phone was ringing with calls from clients, rug makers, and the actress Arielle Dombasle. Grange's maid had just awakened him for our appointment. Although we were in the very heart of Paris, one minute from the Louvre and five from the Paris Opéra, everything was silent except for the piping of birds in the inner court of the Palais-Royal.

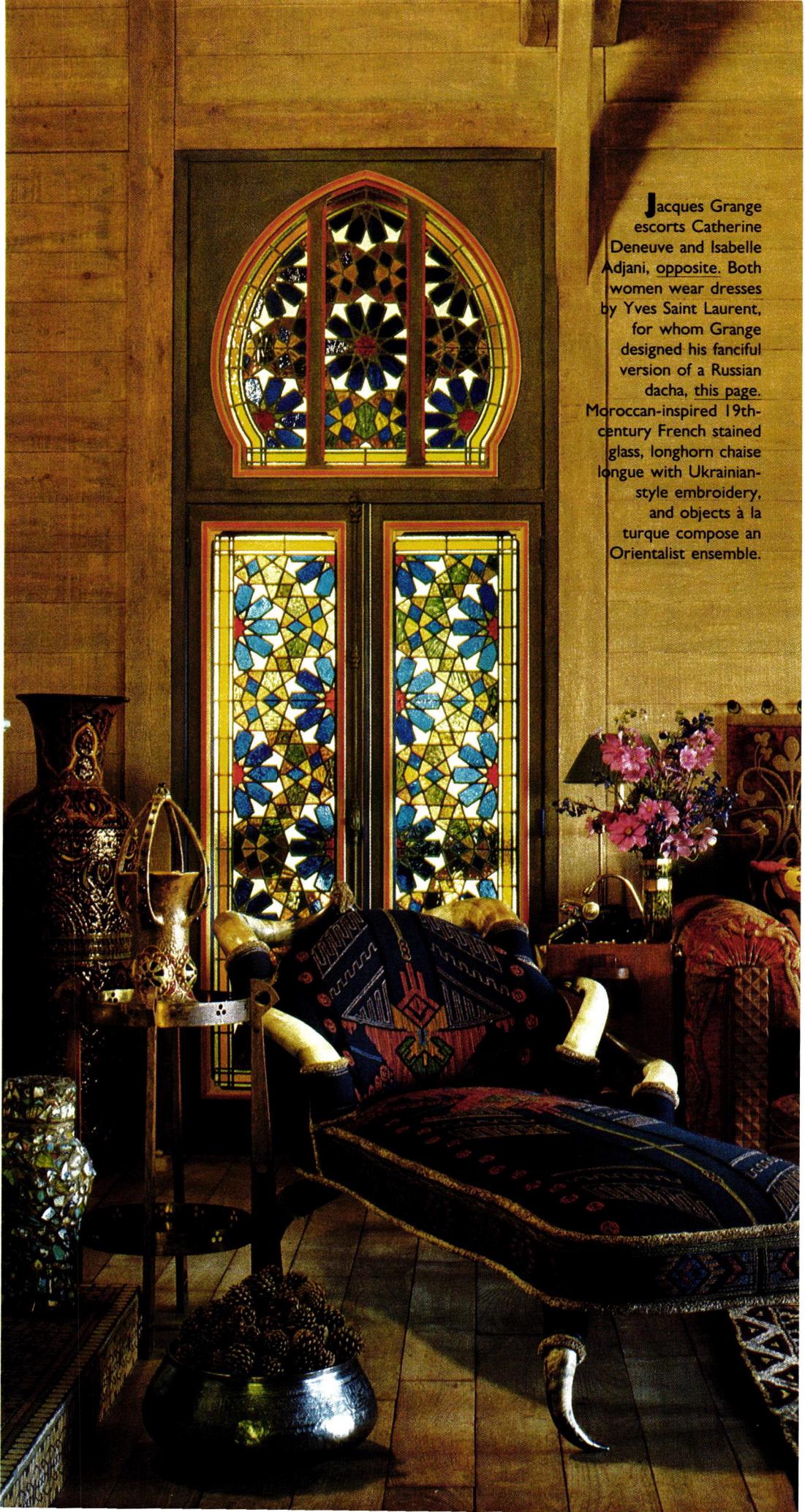
Reflecting, he added, "Even my clients in the States are usually French. In New York, I did Paloma Picasso's showroom and the apartment of Pierre Bergé," president of Yves Saint Laurent's empire and the government-appointed business manager of Paris's opera houses. "Or even when they're real Americans, they're like Mrs. Elizabeth Keck, who built a French house in Bel-Air and asked me to help her design it for her extraordinary eighteenth-century French furniture. She knows exactly what she's talking about."

*Like his high-profile friends and clients, decorator Jacques Grange is an international star. A portfolio of his recent work displays a striking counterpoint of luxury and restraint*

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By EDMUND WHITE

Photographs by FRANÇOIS HALARD



Jacques Grange escorts Catherine Deneuve and Isabelle Adjani, opposite. Both women wear dresses by Yves Saint Laurent, for whom Grange designed his fanciful version of a Russian dacha, this page. Moroccan-inspired 19th-century French stained glass, longhorn chaise longue with Ukrainian-style embroidery, and objects à la turque compose an Orientalist ensemble.

# Grange



But in what lies Grange's "Frenchness"? First, it's in a seductive charm, a lightness, an intimacy. Take his own apartment. It used to belong to Colette, the greatest Frenchwoman writer of this century, the author of *Gigi* and *Chéri*. Here she sat all night on her raft-divan under her blue lamp writing on blue paper, while her much younger husband, Maurice Goudeket, slept in what is now Grange's library. Grange has preserved the flavor, if not the actual objects, of her decor, and his mantel is crowned by André Ostier's wonderfully intense photo of her. Joan Juliet Buck, the novelist, who shuttles between New York and Paris, told me that Grange has carried his Colette fetishism to the point of sometimes living with a woman who shockingly resembles her—all frizzy hair, pointy chin, and bistered eyes.

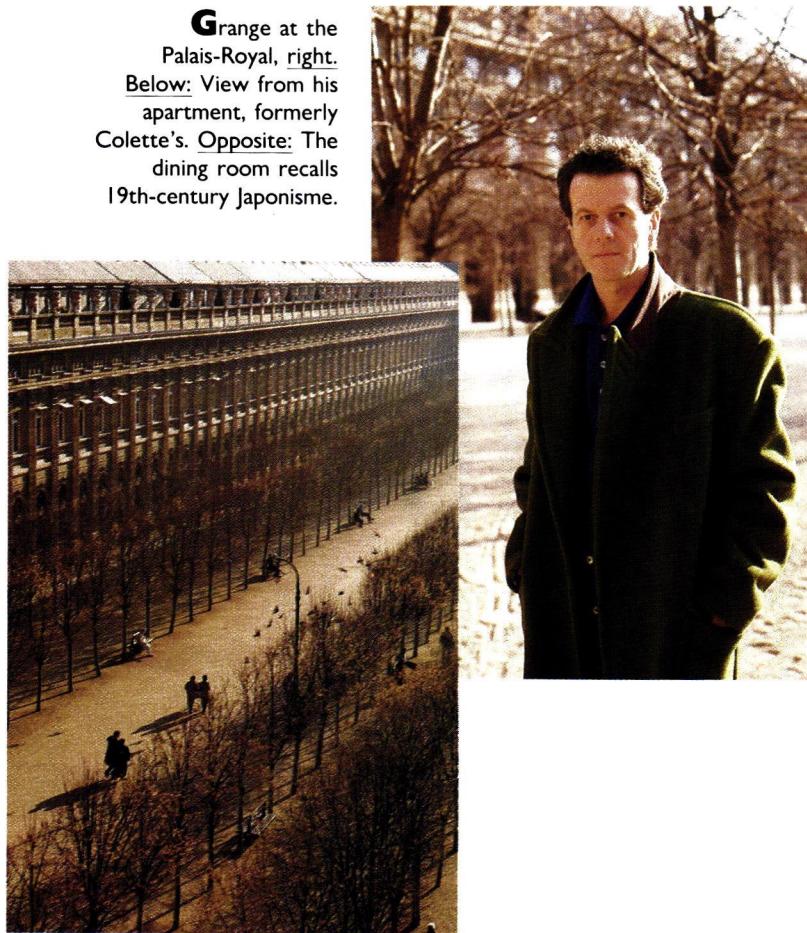
The French like to give a solid rational basis to their most frivolous gestures. Although Grange's apartment seems all caprice—a chandelier from a stage set, a peculiar library ladder—these follies are scrupulously calibrated. When he moved in, he opened up one wall to let the light pour all the way through from the garden side to the street side. He thickened one wall of the salon because, to his eye, it looked slightly too flimsy. He altered a fireplace and cornices, but the additions look centuries old.

He received his serious training at the École Boulle, the school named after Louis XIV's cabinetmaker, André Charles Boulle. "I went there from the age of sixteen to twenty, the four most glorious years of my life," he sighs. Until then he'd been an indifferent student, brought up as he was in a conservative upper-middle-class family in Paris's sixteenth arrondissement. His father was an engineer and one of his ancestors the physician who invented the stethoscope. He was surely slated for a lawyer's or doctor's office.

But he escaped to the Boulle school on the other side of Paris near the scruffier

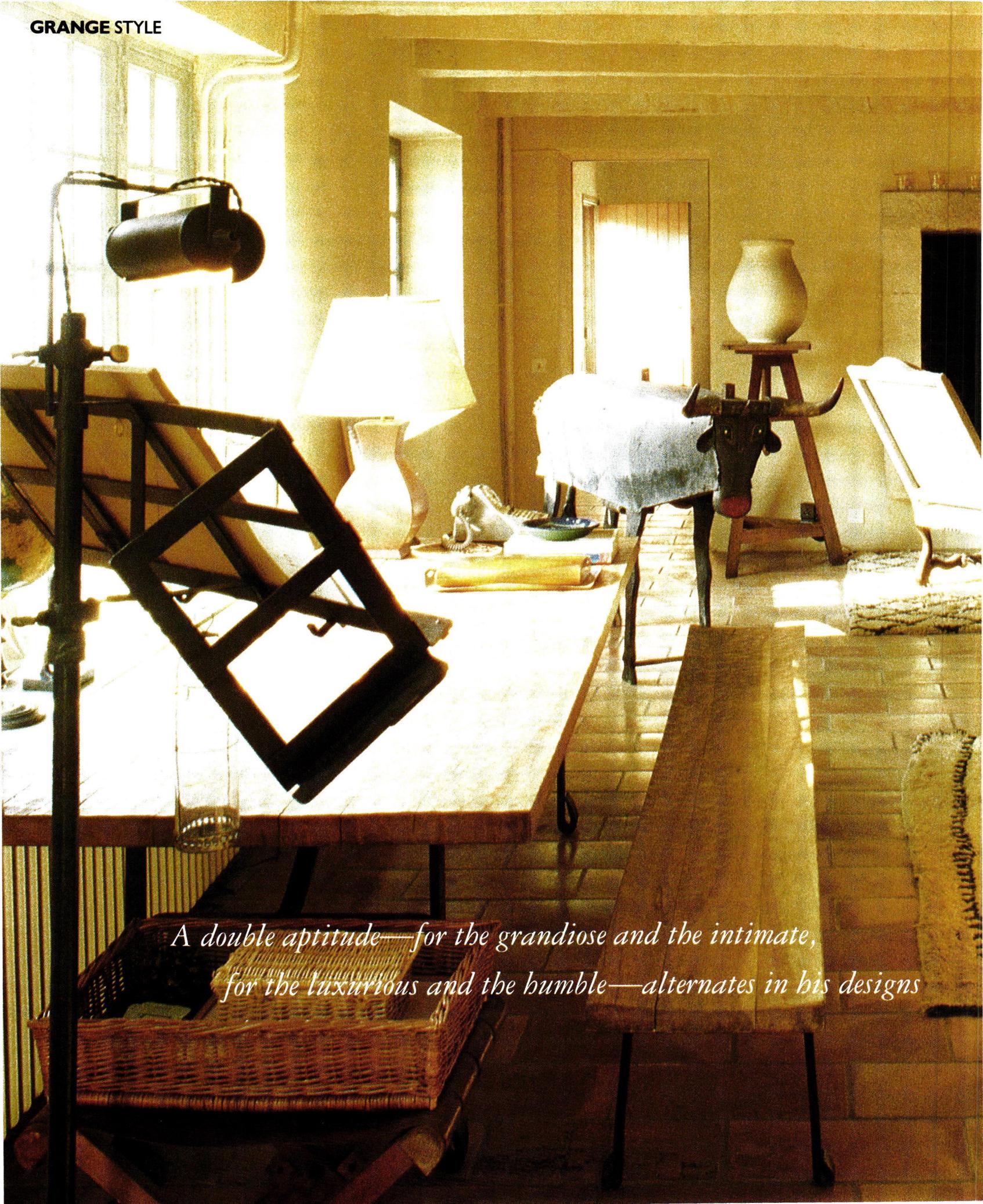
*Although Grange's own apartment seems all caprice, the follies are scrupulously calibrated*

**G**rane at the Palais-Royal, right. Below: View from his apartment, formerly Colette's. Opposite: The dining room recalls 19th-century Japonisme.



**C**artouche above library door, right, painted by Christian Bérard. Photos of 19th-century writers, at left, by Nadar. Antique bronzes rest on a 1950s table.



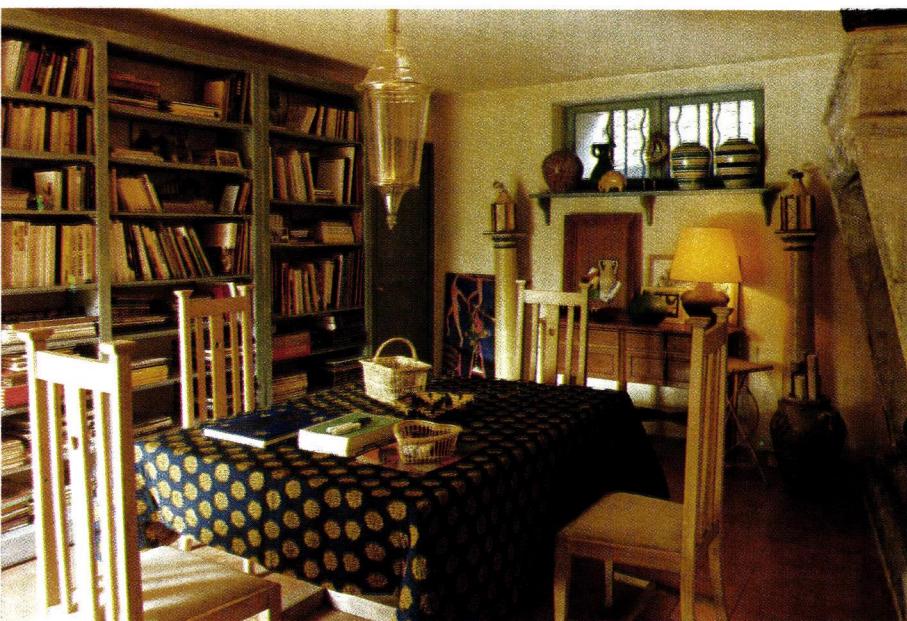


*A double aptitude—for the grandiose and the intimate,  
for the luxurious and the humble—alternates in his designs*

The living room of

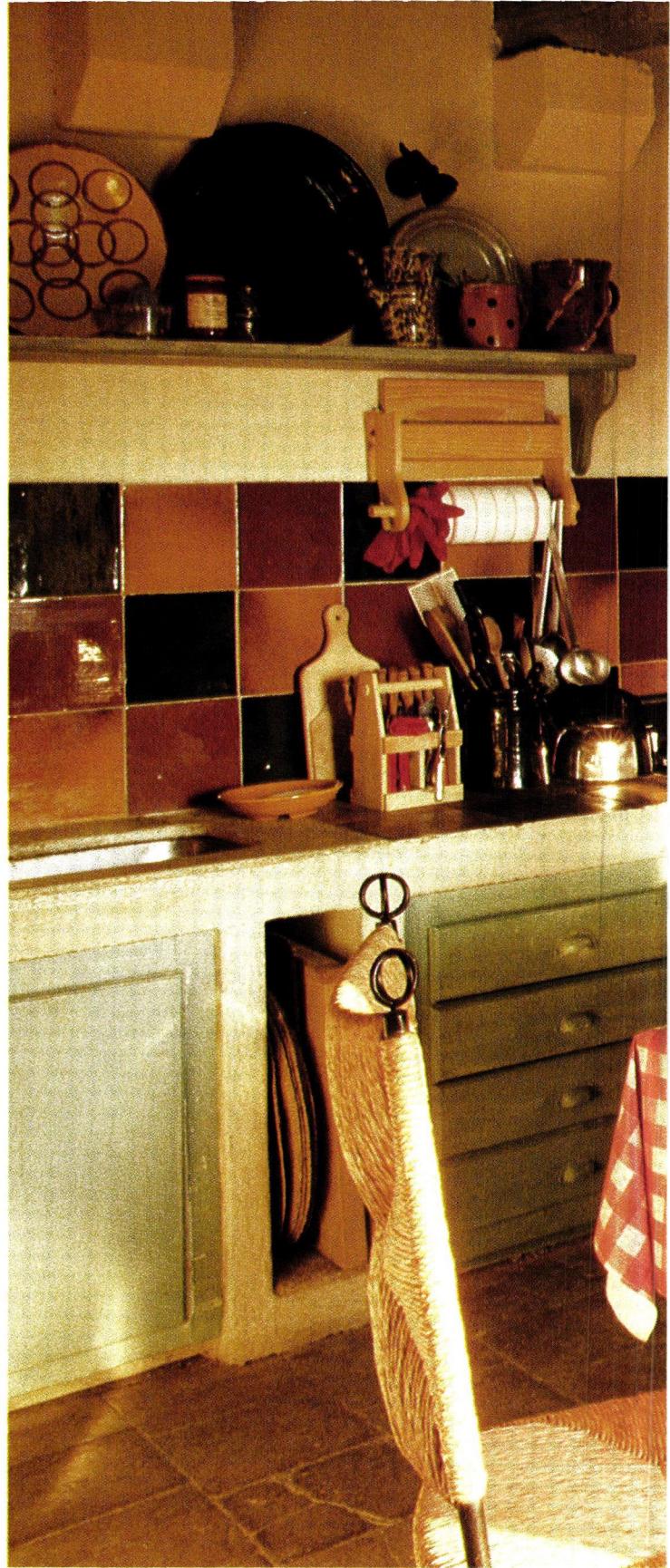
Grange's own Provençal mas was once a  
shed for farm animals. Woven rush chairs are  
by Charlotte Perriand, furniture designer for  
Le Corbusier. The fauteuil near the hearth  
is 17th century. The bull, with a traditional  
mask worn at fêtes in the Camargue,  
stands behind a 1950s oak table by Royère.  
Berber rugs are laid on terra-cotta tiles.





place de la Nation. There he rubbed shoulders with working-class guys and learned the secrets of lacquering furniture, inlaying wood, sewing upholstery, selecting fabrics, and fashioning plasterwork. If today Grange can appreciate a cleverly twisted bit of gold braid or see what's wrong with the way a desk drawer slides in or out, it's all because of Boulle. "I don't design for welfare people in housing projects. I work for the rich, and if I do, it's because my trade allows me to defend old-fashioned craftsmen. That's the greatest thing about France, all these extraordinary craftsmen, and they're thrilled that I can appreciate, criticize—and perpetuate—their skills. I make them laugh. 'Work seriously,' is my motto, 'but don't take yourself seriously.' "

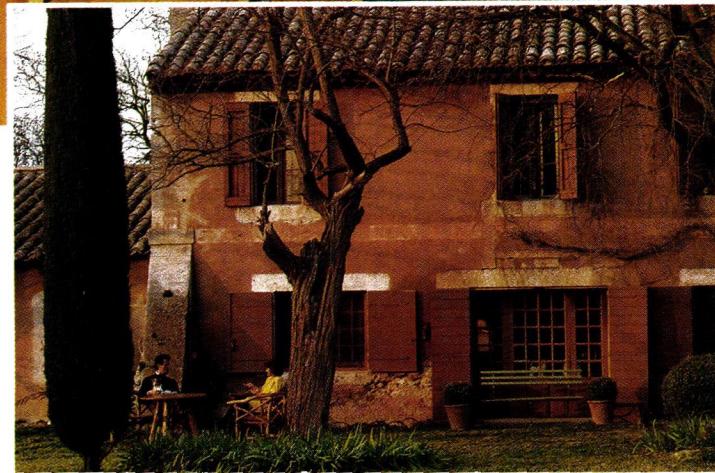
Grange then attended one of the best Parisian schools of interior design, the École Camondo, where he learned the history of architecture, furniture, and decoration. "This is a cruel story," he tells me, "but decorating is a business that destroys mere amateurs. You'd be shocked by the lack of general culture of people in this world. They wouldn't begin to know what you meant if you said you wanted an interior to resemble a Vermeer painting. A lady approached me the



**G**rane's summer bedroom, top left, has 1930s wallhangings by Boisseau behind a 1940s chest. Above left: In the library/dining room, English Arts and Crafts oak chairs, Tarascon quilt tablecloth, and a Venetian lantern. French 19th-century ceramic columns flank shelf displaying Moroccan pottery. Above: The kitchen table is set with Apt earthenware. Opposite inset: The mas in winter.



*A seductive charm and lightness  
underlie Grange's "Frenchness"*



# *At home with Isabelle Adjani*



For his friend the actress Isabelle Adjani, above, Grange decorated a Parisian duplex to suggest the casual ambience of a country house.

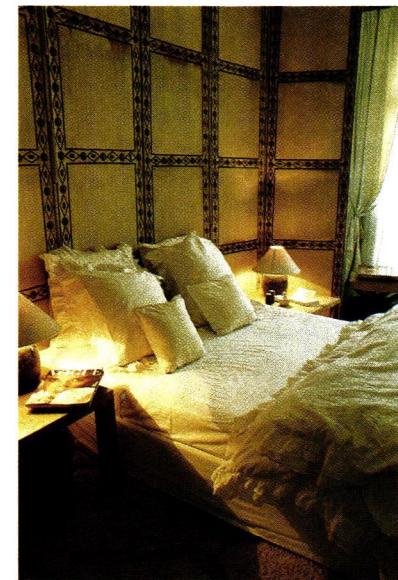
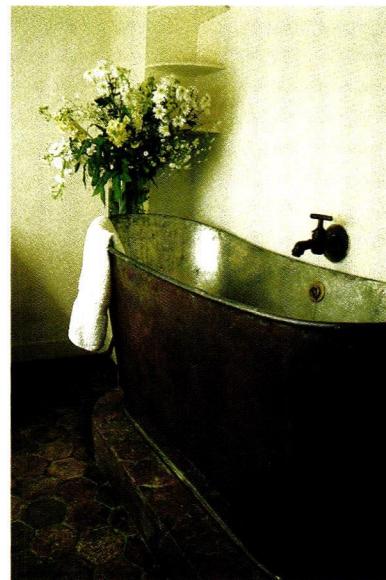
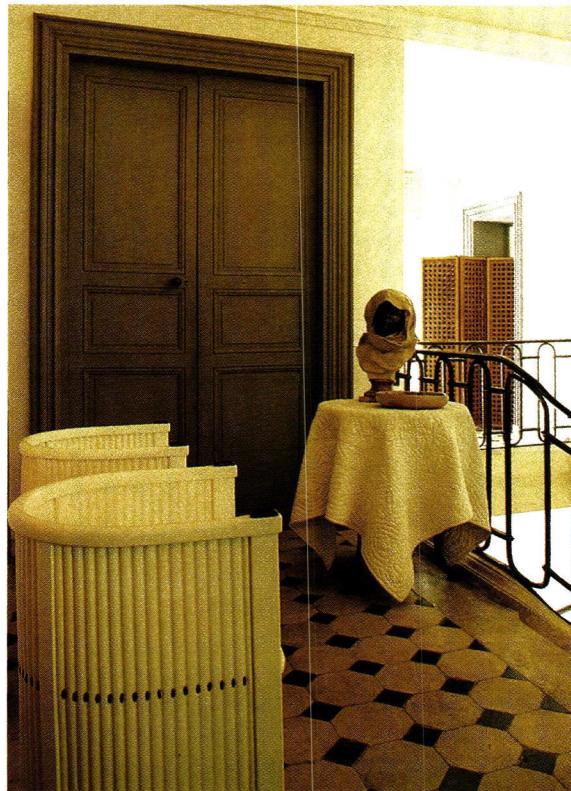
Above right: Old portières frame a view into the living room gallery where simple plank floors and an 18th-century boiserie set off 19th-century tapestry-covered furniture. The painted inset in the alcove is original to the house.

Below right: Pumps Adjani wore in François Truffaut's film *L'Histoire d'Adèle H.* hang above French pine side chairs.





*Grange reinterprets other periods and places through his own sensibility*



The crisp geometry of a stone floor, top, contrasts with the gentle curves of a Grange sofa draped with antique cashmere. To either side of a contemporary Chinese still life, potted palms spread above Thonet tables. Chairs are 19th century Viennese. Left: Armchairs and terra-cotta bust in the entry are also Austrian. Above left: Bathtub is 18th century French. Above right: Nailheads decorate 1940s fabric on screens behind the bed. Tables by Frank; linens from Agnès Comar.



*Jean-Michel Frank is Grange's  
totem, the master of a sobriety  
that approaches anonymity*



Grange keyed his palette for the salon of two art collectors, above, to a grayish Paris sky. A Picasso hangs above a sofa designed by the decorator, with Grosz and Matisse drawings to left and right. Modern serpent-base metal and crystal lamps are by Brandt and Daum; sculpture on coffee table by César between Louis XV fauteuils. A 1930s vignette, opposite inset, with shagreen-covered table by Jean-Michel Frank from the house of Elsa Schiaparelli in front of a Pierre Chareau sofa with tapestry upholstery by Jean Lurçat; screen by Legrain.

other day and asked if I'd hire her as an assistant because she had good taste and rich friends!" His eyebrows shoot up to register his indignation over the idea that his métier amounts to nothing more than taste and an address book.

**W**hen he emerged from school, Grange had a solid foundation but no flair. He was shy and could scarcely speak up in groups. "I was what's called a well brought up boy, alas!" He'd squired heiresses around *rallyes*, the French equivalent of debutante parties; he was a bit like the young Marcel Proust, whose family was equally rich and dowdy.

Then he met François-Marie Banier, a handsome, talented, and compulsively social young novelist who was very thick

In the dining room, below, Russian mahogany and copper chairs, under a Venetian chandelier, surround a Louis XVI table. The fretwork armoire and scenic wall panels are 18th century French. Iron sculpture by Lambert-Rucki.



*"If I work for the rich,  
it's because my trade  
allows me to defend old-  
fashioned craftsmen"*

with Salvador Dali and Louis Aragon—and who introduced Grange to the two women who would shape his taste. The first and foremost was Marie-Laure, the vicomtesse de Noailles, who now, nearly twenty years after her death, remains the most talked about Frenchwoman of her generation. She had a taste for extraordinary luxury and the eye and money to secure it. The architect Robert Mallet-Stevens designed for her an immense Cubist-style villa in reinforced concrete for which Marie-Laure commissioned sculptures from Alberto Giacometti, Zadkine, Lipchitz, and Laurens. That was in the south of France near Toulon.

In Paris her husband, Charles de Noailles, had already assembled an exemplary collection of eighteenth-century furniture, which Marie-Laure mixed freely with objects from all periods—a Braque painting, a 1925 piano, antique snuffboxes, an Art Nouveau chair. Her upstairs salon (now destroyed, though recorded in photos) was the masterpiece of Jean-Michel Frank, the melancholy designer who worked with painter Christian Bérard and furniture maker Diego Giacometti (brother of Alberto), to fashion the simplest, most perfectly proportioned, and refined lamps, chairs, and tables of the 1930s—set off by the gay floral rugs that Bérard concocted. Jean-Michel Frank is Grange's (Text continued on page 168)

A custom-made sofa upholstered in antique brocatelle silk with twisted silk cord strikes an exotic note in the Orientalized 18th-century Ruby salon.

Double layers of taffeta enhance the volume of curtains, a technique borrowed from haute couture. The gilt mirror, ormolu-mounted commode, and fauteuils covered in needlepoint are all Régence.

Twin tabourets and the bergère in the foreground are Louis XV. Carpet is 18th century Savonnerie.







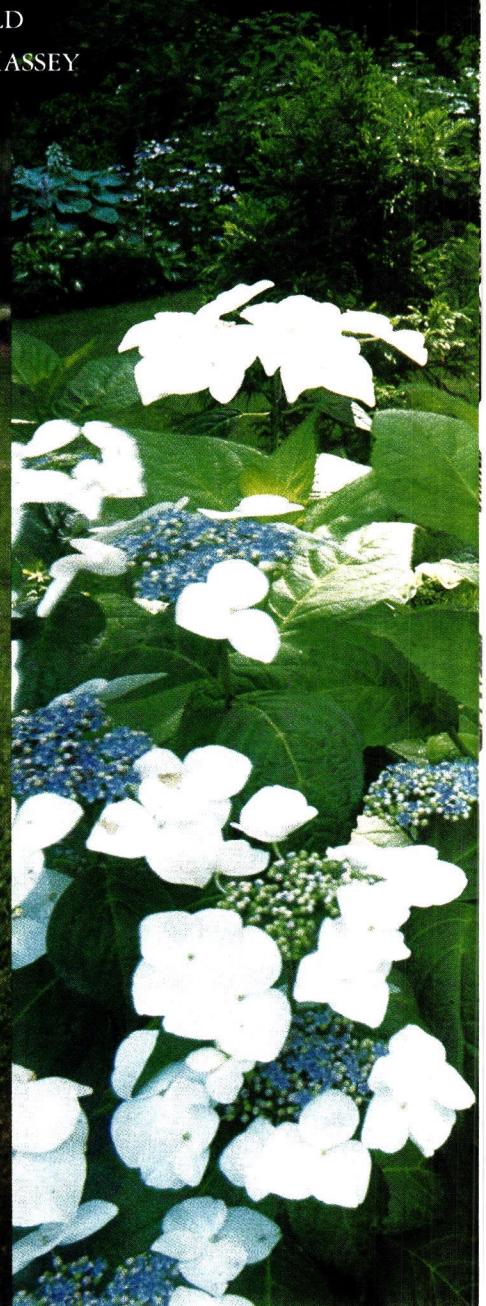
# PRINCESS IN THE GARDEN

*A cultivated woodland flourishes in the coastal domain of Princess Greta Sturdza*

By MAC GRISWOLD

Photographs by DAVID MASSEY

The mistress of Le Vasterival wears a gardening apron, hip-slung secateurs, and cultivating fork twelve hours a day. Right: European white birches (*Betula pendula*) and the princess's own hydrangea cultivar (*Hydrangea japonica 'Le Vasterival'*) light up the woodland.







**A**stilbes, calla lilies, purple loosestrife, and a tree-climbing rose (*Rosa maximowicziana*). Top: Above: Banked heathers are only one of many ground covers. Right: Gunnera towers over a carpet of other moisture-loving plants. Behind, a gold and silver shrub border sweeps up the hill.

**W**hat do you want for your birthday, darling?" Prince Georges Sturdza asked Princess Greta. "Manure," she said. On the day, a heaping truckload duly arrived. At Le Vasterival on the Norman coast, hundreds of loads of manure have been dug into the garden soil since 1957, when the Sturdzas settled into the cottage there.

Intensive natural fertilization is part of la méthode Sturdza, a rigorous plant care program evolved by the princess during her 65 years of gardening. Besides soil as rich and light as Dutch cocoa, she prescribes huge planting holes so roots spread luxuriantly and everything thrives. Since she is a fanatic about leaf mold mulch, which is put on every bed to a depth of exactly two inches each fall, the plantings are weed-free, and impossibly tender varieties survive the winter.

Normandy is like England—rain and roses, say Frenchmen who visit Normandy in the summer. But the gardens they come to are French and formal, full of clipped bushes and vistas, where flowers are brought to a well-disciplined peak in time for the traditional August holidays. By contrast, Le Vasterival is an exotic garden here: an eighteen-acre woodland in the informal English and American tradition. It's a four-season garden with spring flowering trees, the princess's own delicate hydrangea cultivars in summer, fiery autumnal foliage unusual in Europe, and a winter lit by camellias, early rhododendrons, hellebores, and the red and gold of carefully chosen stems and barks.

The pH factor hovers between 4.8 and 6.5—perfect for acid-loving rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, and all the other piedmont flora of North America, China, and Japan. In the mild climate, calla lilies and agapanthus, protected by the famous mulch, survive just fine. Scrubby native oak, ash, and wild cherry are thickened with broadleaf evergreens and conifers to make a coastal windbreak. Behind, the garden comprises a wooded hillside and plateau and, below, a boggy-bottomed open valley undulating with beds of small flowering trees and shrubs. Magnolias and camellias grow at the woodland fringes as they once grew in the wild, tall and willowy, not squat and suburban.

The princess tries to control her collecting habit by arranging in drifts—there are quantities of different skimmias, flowering plums, birches, and dozens of other





plant families. Her design problems are complicated by the unremitting arrival of rare specimens sent to her by national arboreta and botanical gardens, which know the new plants will be safe there.

The ground covers are extraordinary: a flat blanket of little blue wood anemones patched with ghost-white Yugoslavian cuckoo flower (*Cardamine trifolia*), three or four different cyclamens grown together, winter-bronzed epimediums, clematis 'Nelly Moser' pegged to the ground in light shade, starring its own dark foliage with striped pink flowers. Only someone in love with plants could have made this intricate garden.

**A** long, muddy, and beautiful walk finishes with tea in the cottage. The princess unstraps her seateur holster from her hip and lays aside her cultivating crook. When she takes off her loden layers and the gloves she invariably wears, her long red fingernails and perfectly cut silvery hair emerge. They are as much a part of the Sturdza look as the well-groomed European birches from whose pale gray bark she washes the moss that flourishes in the damp Norman climate. Princess Sturdza's view of the world is both affectionate and exacting; her bright blue eyes are triangular from a lifetime of observing and measuring plants and people.

Casualness prevails indoors. At tea the cream pitcher and sugar bowl don't match—but after all, if one is silver and the other gold, who cares? A portrait of her late mother-in-law wearing a fur-bordered Slavic crown and pounds of emeralds surveys the buns and fire. The Sturdzas came to Normandy when their Rumanian properties, along with the 35 gardeners, vanished in the Russian aftermath of World War II. Her garden staff consists of three. One is a heavy drinker who turns up each morning to be stoked by the princess with a quart of hot chocolate and four cheese sandwiches. Everyone at Le Vasterival is on a feeding program.

Princess (Text continued on page 167)

**A** daring colorist, Princess Sturdza harmonizes pale yellow broom (*Cytisus × praecox*) and dark purple maples with shrimp-pink sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Brilliantissimum'). It keeps its spring leaf color for weeks before turning green.







In the salon, above, Birgitte de Ganay combines patterned fabrics to accent turn-of-the-century moldings painted white. Festooned silk curtains were printed to order by Thorp of London. The chaise longue is draped with an 1850 cashmere shawl. Madame de Ganay designed tasseled poufs to double as tables or seating for buffet dinners. Right: At work with Karl Lagerfeld. Opposite: She wears Lagerfeld for an evening out.





*While helping  
Karl Lagerfeld shape  
his public image,  
Birgitte de Ganay  
cultivates her own  
personal style*

*By JAMES BURSTALL  
Photographs by KAREN RADKAI*

# IN HER OWN FASHION

**I** should hate a life of waking up in the morning to the same breakfast in the same room," says Birgitte de Ganay in perfect French with a strong Scandinavian accent. "If there's one word I despise, it's 'monotony.'" For Madame de Ganay, who is public relations officer for Karl Lagerfeld, there has been little danger of monotony ever since she left her native Denmark twenty years ago at age twenty. Two marriages to two Frenchmen later—one to a news journalist, one to Comte Michel de Ganay—she now spends her days developing the Lagerfeld fashion image through media coverage.

Evenings she comes home to a sixth-floor apartment overlooking Paris's rue de Sèvres in the sixth arrondissement. There

she likes to have dinner parties. On this subject, as on most others, she has strong opinions. "Every dinner table must be laid differently," she says. "It's sad when you can tell a table has been set by a butler or a valet without any sense of fantasy."

When Madame de Ganay isn't entertaining, she is likely to be dressed in jeans and a white shirt, reading or playing with her two King Charles spaniels, Vanessa and Daschka. It is a distinct contrast to her previous way of life, which included two houses in Argentina, the Château de Fleury at Fontainebleau, and a Paris hôtel particulier in the seventh arrondissement. Her life now is "totally modern," she says.

That doesn't, however, mean that her apartment is totally





*The effect of "beautiful chaos,"  
as Madame de Ganay refers to it,  
seems more English than French*



modern. It is instead a cozy dark-hued backdrop for an ever-changing tableau. Everywhere the eye falls, there are objects scattered in unusual combinations so that they seem to become icons of everyday life. Fabrics with different motifs from different continents play off one another. Books are in piles, near to hand for easy reference.

The effect of "beautiful chaos," as Madame de Ganay refers to it, seems more English than French. "English style and taste please me more than French," she says, "perhaps because of my Anglo-Saxon roots. English decoration seems to be warmer and more comfortable.

"A house for me is something that lives and breathes. It must always be changing and moving in order to provide us with new surprises." Part of the way Madame de Ganay achieves her goal of constant change is through inventive shifting and recycling of things. "Every few months I juggle everything around the apartment," she says. "Shawls I've been wearing become beautiful tablecloths, the dining room becomes a bedroom. I want to be able to astonish guests every time they come here."

Observant guests, for instance, must have been at least mildly astonished to notice the transmogrification of an apron into a pair

of flowery cushions. "It would be such a pity not to be able to enjoy such beautiful material," Madame de Ganay says.

Another part of the Ganay strategy for the apartment involves flea market finds. She has spent, she says, much of the past two years at flea markets. She likes, in particular, objects that serve more than one purpose. A reproduction eighteenth-century French sculpture of a lion, found at an antiques shop around the corner, does double duty as a paperweight and a stand for her riding hats. In the center of the drawing room are red, green, and gold silk poufs, which she



designed herself. They serve as footrests, coffee tables, or stools for buffet dinners, depending on the moment's needs.

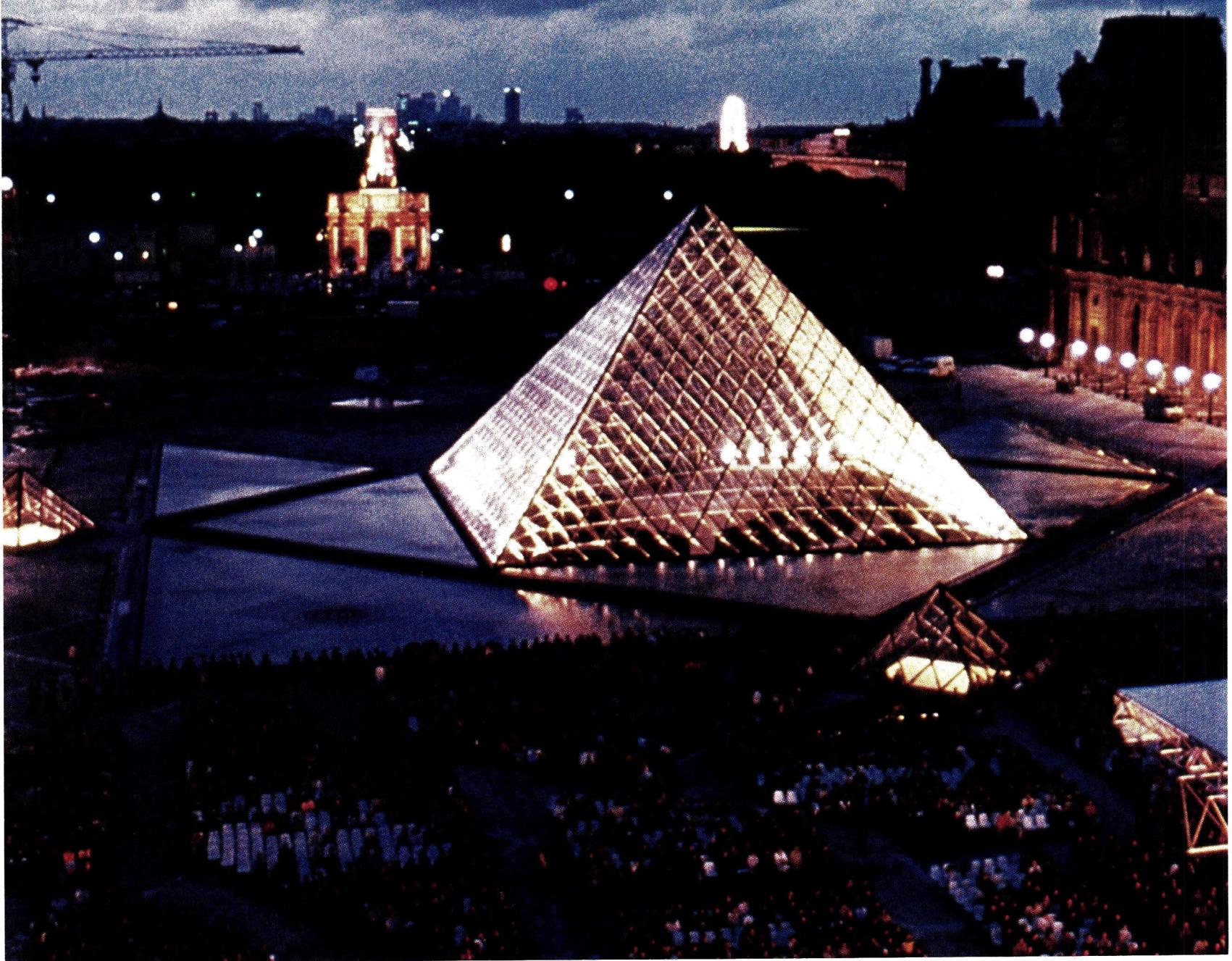
The furniture for the apartment was chosen on the basis of comfort and personal appeal, not market value. "When I was with Michel," she says, "everything was Napoleon III, Empire, Louis XIV. But that's all too fashionable now in society circles." Her deliberately unfashionable furniture is in a palette of reds, burgundies, and deep ochers.

The library is the room that is perhaps most quintessentially Ganay in its translation of Anglo-French-Scandinavian style. The sofa is covered with wool cashmere from 1850; a pale polished wooden stool is of typical Scandinavian design; there is a chaise longue where she likes to read; the walls are covered with a series of English and French sporting prints; the flower arrangements are by her. It is a charming cross-cultural assemblage, and it will most likely be different in some way by next week. Birgitte de Ganay wouldn't have it any other way. ▀

**B**irgitte de Ganay, opposite above,  
at Le Petit Lutetia. Opposite below: In the bedroom, a fur-covered divan and a serpentine  
confidant. Above: In the library, subtle floral chintz on the chaise longue complements  
cashmere stripes on sofa. Below: With friends amid antique Danish porcelain.



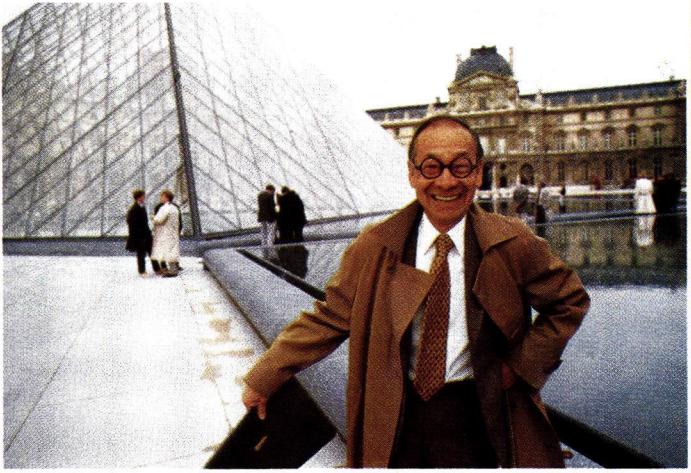
# WHAT PRICE GLORY?



*To cement his place in French history, François Mitterrand decreed the \$3 billion architecture program that has changed the face of Paris*

By MARTIN FILLER

A glow at the center of the Louvre's Cour Napoléon, the glass pyramid by I. M. Pei is the most famous symbol of President François Mitterrand's monumental nine-part building scheme, known as the Grands Projets. Right: Mitterrand at the Louvre construction site.

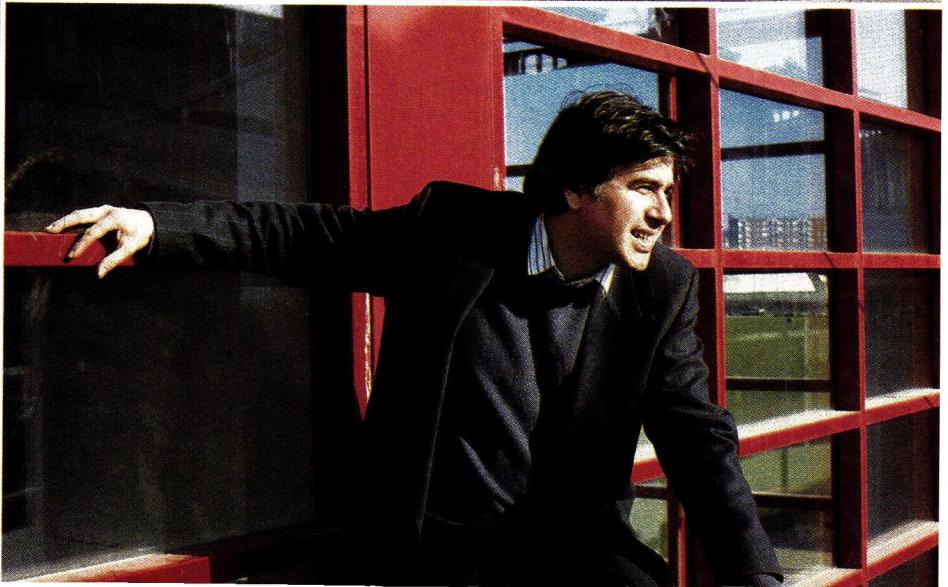
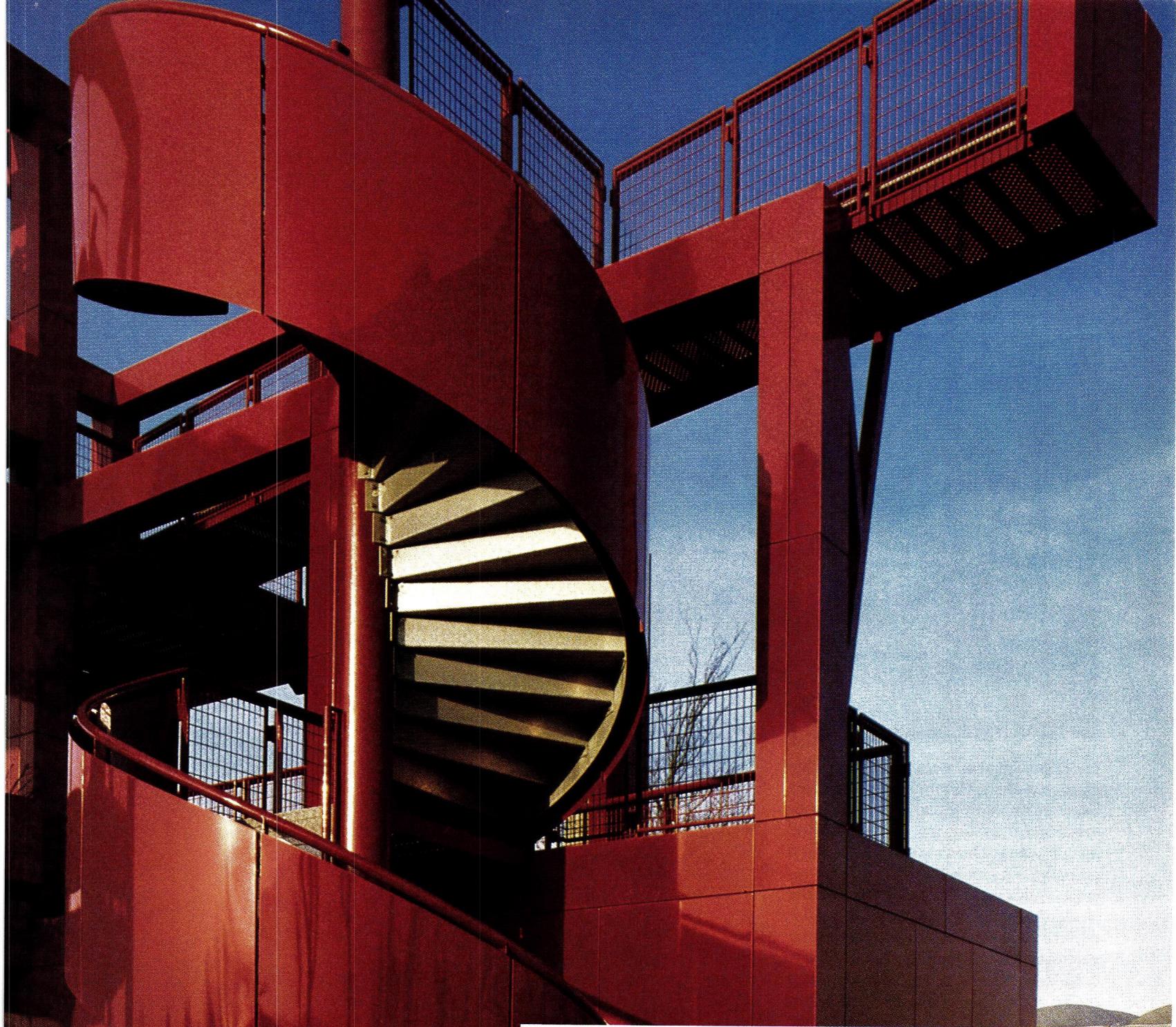


**I**t was a ceremony made all the more moving by its unexpected simplicity. Late on a balmy spring afternoon in Paris, a tricolor ribbon was stretched in front of the gleaming glass pyramid as curious tourists looked on. A nine-year-old schoolboy named David, spending Easter vacation in the city with his grandmother, caught the attention of an official. The lad, wearing a bright red jersey, was pulled from the crowd and into his hands was placed a pillow with a pair of scissors on it. A few moments later, with neither trumpet fanfares nor drumrolls, the president of the French Republic stepped forward. François Mitterrand took the shears, cut the red, white, and blue band, and thereby officially opened the Grand Louvre, centerpiece of the most stupendous public building program in recent French history.

Mitterrand was acutely aware that his political enemies—who had tried to kill his visionary conception in its earliest stages—would accuse him of imperial tendencies if the festivities surrounding this great event became too elaborate. Things were therefore deliberately kept low-key. But it mattered not at all, for the new Louvre and the other components of Mitterrand's nine-part plan originally known as the Grands Projets (and now being called the Grands Travaux as they reach comple-

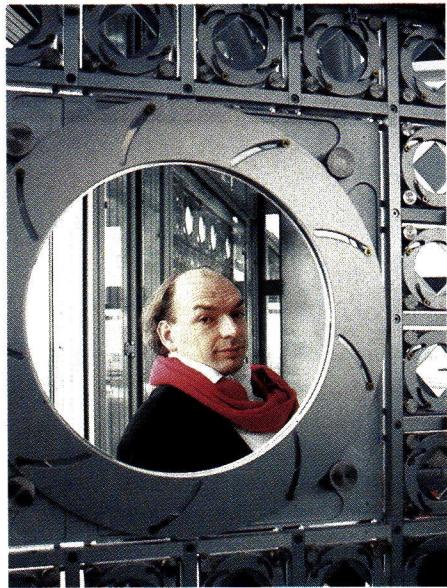
**Spiral staircases**  
enliven two of the most successful of the Grands Projets designs. Beneath the Louvre's glass pyramid, right, forming the new entry to the museum, a dramatic helix without visible means of support, by I. M. Pei, above. The sprightly belvedere folly at Parc de la Villette, opposite, by architect Bernard Tschumi, opposite inset.





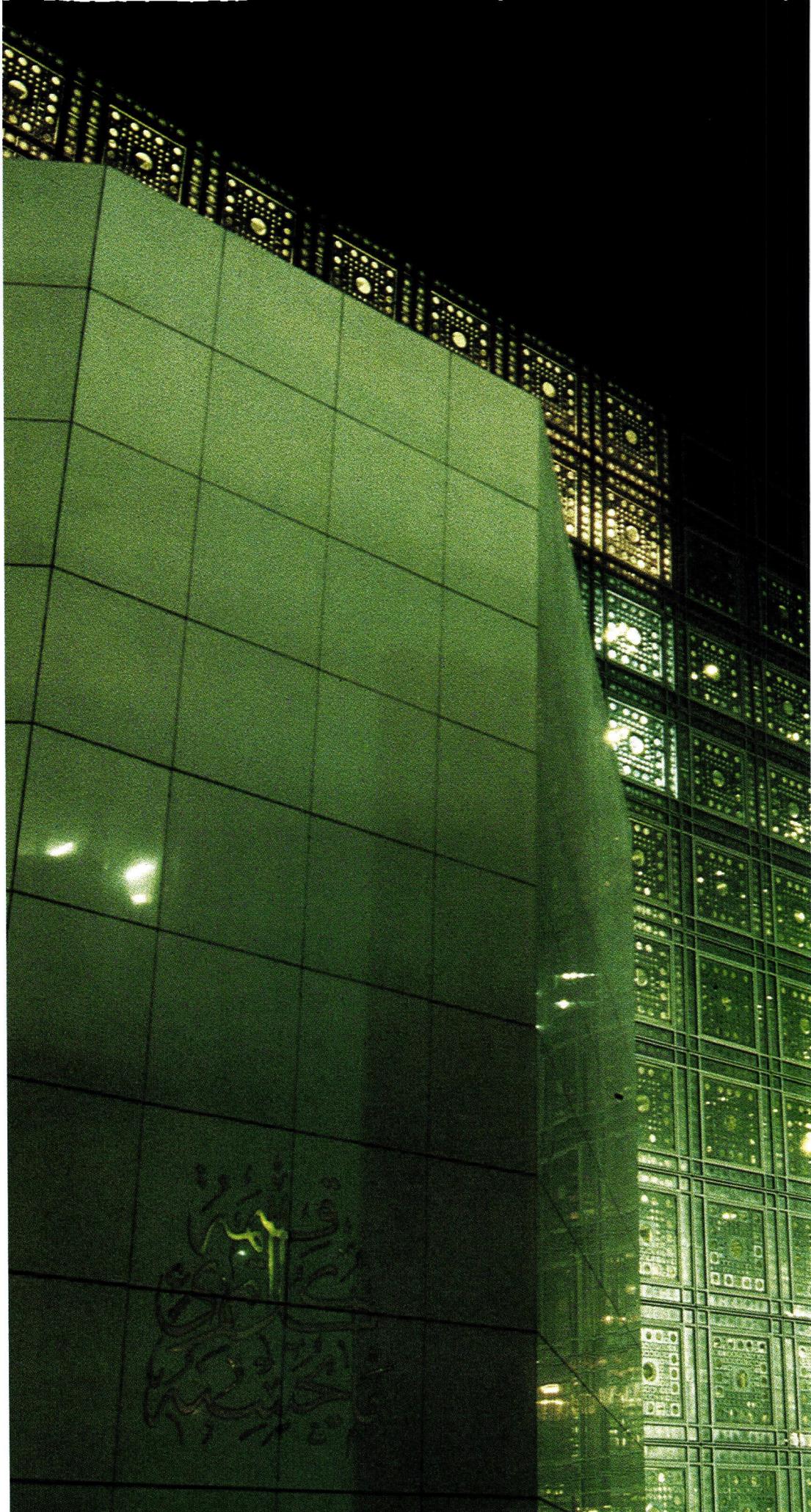
tion) are so imposing that they need no further flourishes to get his message across. This is the architecture of grandeur as the French have consistently aspired to create it: monumental, centralized, and novel. Though stylistically diverse, all the Grands Projets are united by the overarching French notion that urban design must enhance the glory of the nation.

Ironically, it took a Socialist president to conceive and execute this \$3 billion build-



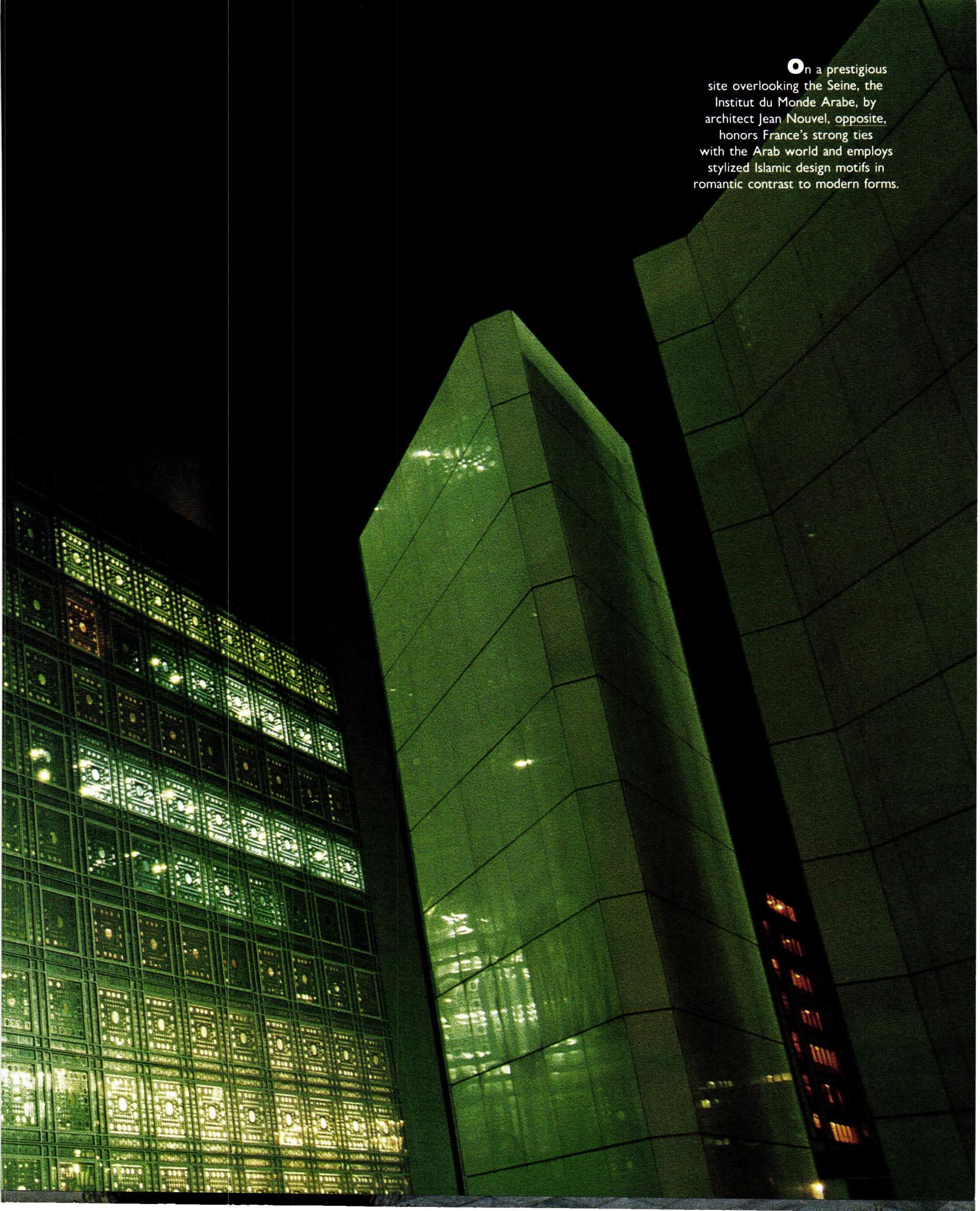
ing extravaganza. Within months of his election in 1981, Mitterrand announced his intention to renovate and expand the Louvre. Early the following year he revealed the full extent of his sweeping architectural proposals—a comprehensive effort to restore France to its erstwhile role as the world's center of the arts. Naïve though it may be to believe that architecture alone can reverse that complicated shift, Mitterrand has nonetheless put his full prestige on the line in order to bring the Grands Projets about in time for the bicentennial of the French Revolution this month.

**H**is ambitions are worthy of an absolutist monarch in their audacity, expense, and scope. The president, however, views this as an enterprise for the people, to make culture more accessible for the average French citizen. Yet his critics have deemed it an edifice complex, a deep-seated desire to enshrine himself among other great builders in French history such as Louis XIV, Napoleon, Baron Haussmann, and Gustave Eiffel. There is no doubt that in terms of sheer volume, Mitterrand has al-

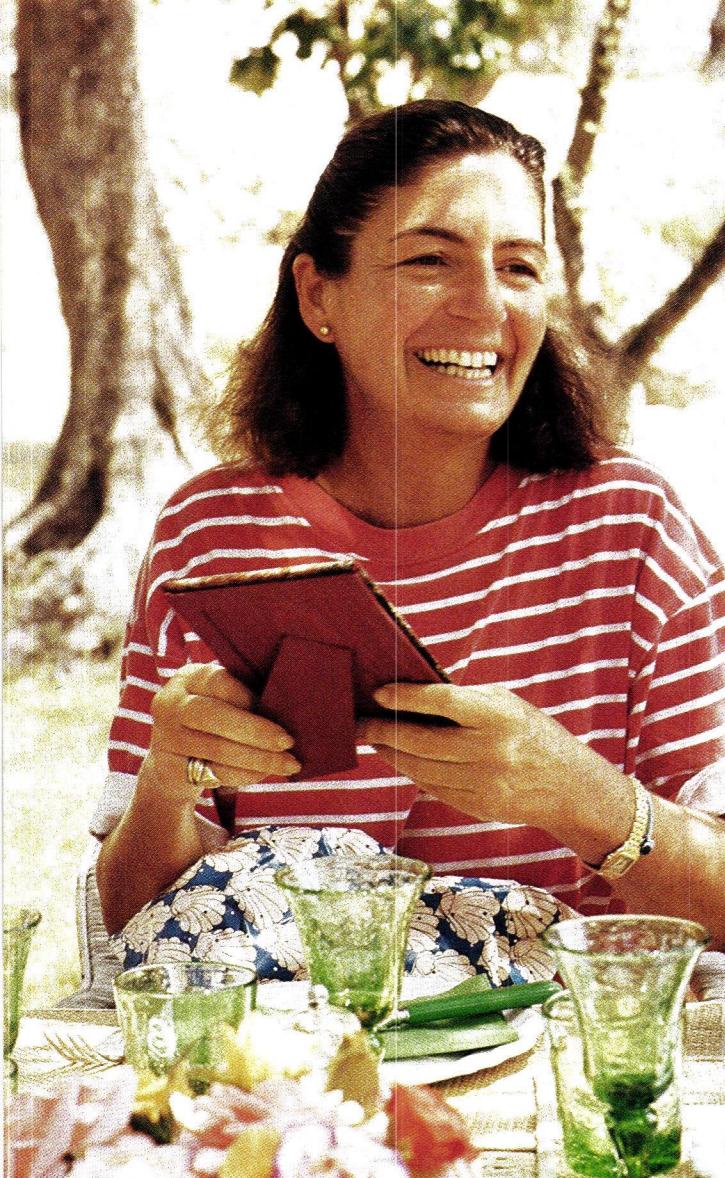


RIGHT: AGENCE TOP/CATHERINE BIBOLLET  
ABOVE: GUY BOUCHET

**O**n a prestigious site overlooking the Seine, the Institut du Monde Arabe, by architect Jean Nouvel, opposite, honors France's strong ties with the Arab world and employs stylized Islamic design motifs in romantic contrast to modern forms.







# The Essence of PROVENCE

*Three generations of Amics have found refuge in a Provençal family retreat*

By CHARLA CARTER

Photographs by FRANÇOIS HALARD

**T**ake a house the color of a sun-ripened peach, set it in a landscape of lavender and olive groves against a brilliant blue sky, and what have you got? The antithesis of the cliché Normandy farmhouse so favored these days by Parisians suffering from *mal de ville*.

Chez Jean and Irène Amic in the south of France, there's not an oak beam or thatched roof in sight. This Provençal farmhouse has been in the Amic family since 1930, and there have been Amics in the region since 1820, when Jean's ancestor founded a perfume distillery in nearby Grasse. Today Jean is president of

**I**rène Amic, above left, at table en plein air. Above: The pool was built away from the house because Jean Amic's father disliked the sound of splashing. Opposite: Boots, hat, and a basket for gathering are ready for a day's wandering in the pine-tufted hills.



the company his family built, and although the Amics are staunch Parisians, whenever Jean is in Grasse on business they spend weekends at their retreat. And for two months each summer Irène receives family and friends for what usually turns out to be one long house party.

La Prouveresse (The Provider in Provençal) jolts to life when the Amic children, Alexandre, 24, and Ileana, 23, are on vacation from their jobs in Tokyo and Hong Kong and when friends descend en masse from Paris. Then the turquoise shutters of its eight bedrooms are flung open, and the sound of bare feet on its *tommette*-tiled floors provides a counterpoint to the grasshoppers' constant drone. "We always have the same group of friends," Irène says. "That's my idea of a real vacation."

**B**reakfast is laid out on small wicker tables in the garden. They and the pastel-painted nineteenth-century pine and rattan chairs are part of a truckload of unpretentious English country furniture Irène filled the house with a few years ago after thieves twice emptied it of rare eighteenth-century Provençal pieces. Though less grand now without its original antique trappings, the house reflects the Amic ideal of simple, effortless living. "We've tried to simplify things as much as possible," says Irène. "We don't want any constraints."

Lunch is at one thirty in the afternoon and dinner at nine, but in between guests can entertain themselves whenever and however they like. Pallid Parisians usually make a beeline for the pool, which is hardly visible from the house at the end of a rosemary-lined pathway. According to Henri, the caretaker since 1952, Jean's father didn't like to be disturbed by the sound of splashing and had the pool built away from the house overlooking a valley of silvery olive groves.

The energetic don sneakers and hit the pine-tufted hills behind the house for hikes in the *arrière-pays*, or backcountry. "We're a great family for walking," Irène says. "There are wonderful hilltop villages to explore, and Jean often takes his motorcycle up into the mountains. There's always an antiques fair on somewhere, and sometimes we'll pile into the car and drive to Saint-Paul-de-Vence to see what exhibit's on at the Maeght Foundation. And it's a wonderful place to read."

In summer La Prouveresse's thick plaster walls, most of them tinted sun-washed shades of apricot, keep the high-ceilinged rooms deliciously cool. The

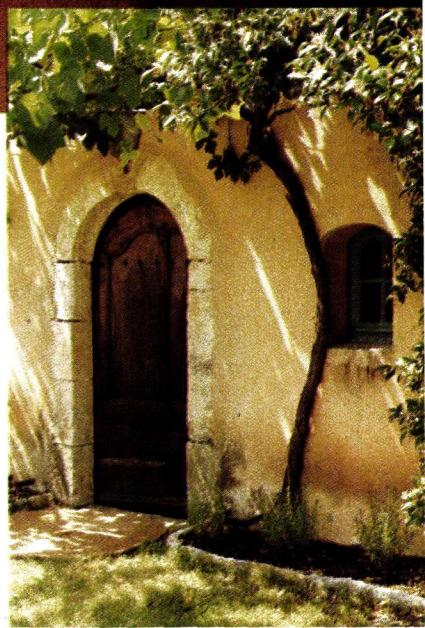
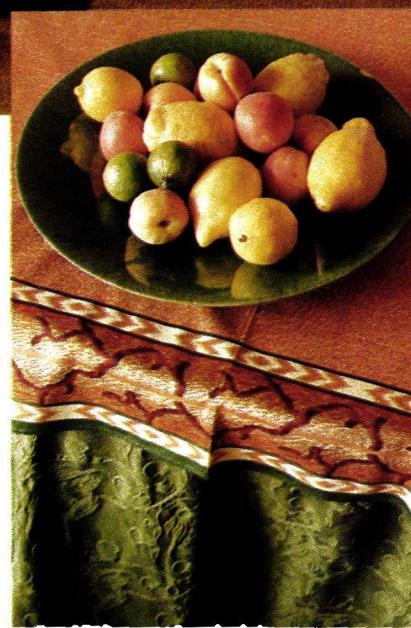
(Text continued on page 166)





The dining table, above, set with Moustiers faience. A typical menu: squash flower fritters, salade niçoise, pissaladière, cheese, and fruit. Opposite above: The living room is the site of after-dinner gatherings. Right:

Fruits are only one component in the fragrant potpourri that is the essence of La Prouveresse. Far right: A stone doorway welcomes family and friends.

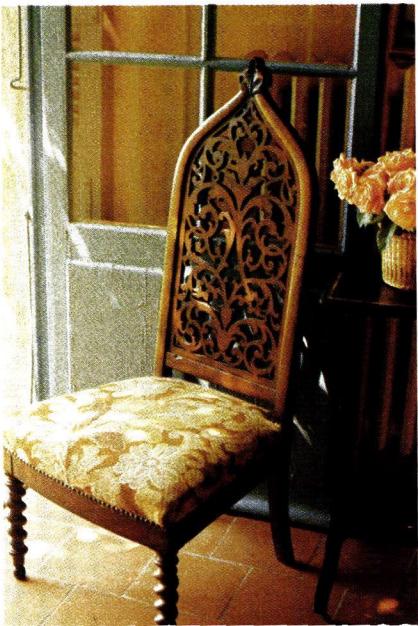
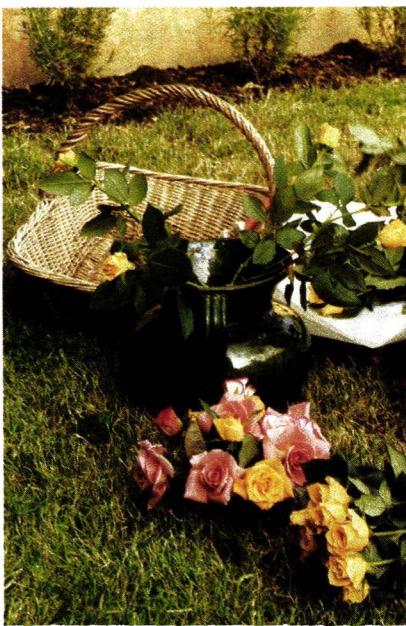




*In summer the thick walls  
keep the rooms deliciously cool*



In the entrance hall, above, an 18th-century Aubusson canvas tapestry pattern. Through curved double doors of walnut, a glimpse of the dining room. **Opposite inset:** Irène Amic does menu and garden planning at her desk. **Above right:** Breakfast is served on small wicker tables in the garden. **Right:** Flowers gathered by Irène Amic. **Far right:** A Gothic Revival chair.

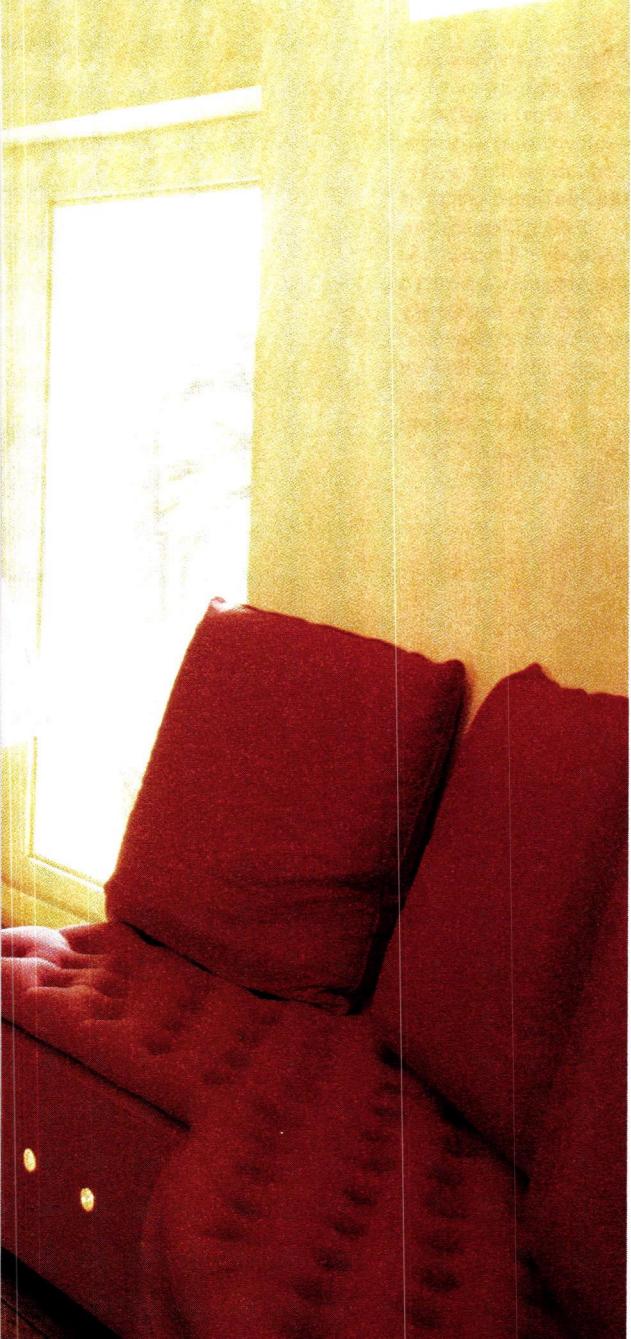




# Barbarians at Play

*Paris designers Mattia Bonetti and Elizabeth Garouste have polished their neo-primitive style*

*By CHARLES GANDEE*



A corkscrew-leg cabinet on a sprightly striped carpet, right, at Lacroix. Opposite: A decorative detail of Gazebo, a new cotton fabric by Bonetti and Garouste for Étamine, Paris. Details see Resources.



**M**attia Bonetti and Elizabeth Garouste, left, with fashion designer Christian Lacroix at right, in the new Lacroix boutique the duo designed at 73 rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, right. Below: The Cocarde chair is Bonetti and Garouste's homage to the French Revolution.



**I**t is rare that a chair can make you grin, that a table can make you smile, that a stool can make you laugh, that a carpet can make you want to kick up your heels and dance. But the chairs, tables, stools, and carpets that bear the stamp of Mattia Bonetti and Elizabeth Garouste can—and do—elicit just such unexpected responses. As a matter of fact, the designers' current work sparks a wide range of emotional reactions. You may love it. You may hate it. But you will not be indifferent to it.

Christian Lacroix, no stranger to provocative design, is the man who made Bonetti and Garouste famous. Or at least he helped. In 1987, when the French couturier invited the little-known partners to fashion a new salon for him on the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, he effectively ushered them out of the shadows of contemporary French design and into the spotlight. Which is precisely where they belong.

With Lacroix's moody showroom, Bonetti and Garouste introduced the world to a decorative style that might best be described as part Neanderthal man, part Fred Flintstone, part Margaret Mead, part Carl Jung. Raffia skirts, devilish horns, and gnarled bronze legs were among the delights of the neo-primitive aesthetic devised by Bonetti and Garouste, who were instantly dubbed—gentle people though they are—the New Barbarians.

Now, two years later, it appears that Bonetti and Garouste have, shall we say, evolved. They have traded in their rugged animal skins for polished chintz. Their palette is brighter, livelier, more cele-





bratory. Although the partners still display a fascination with organic shapes and natural forms, those shapes and forms have been noticeably refined. In other words, their work no longer looks like the stuff of which chic cave dwellings are made.

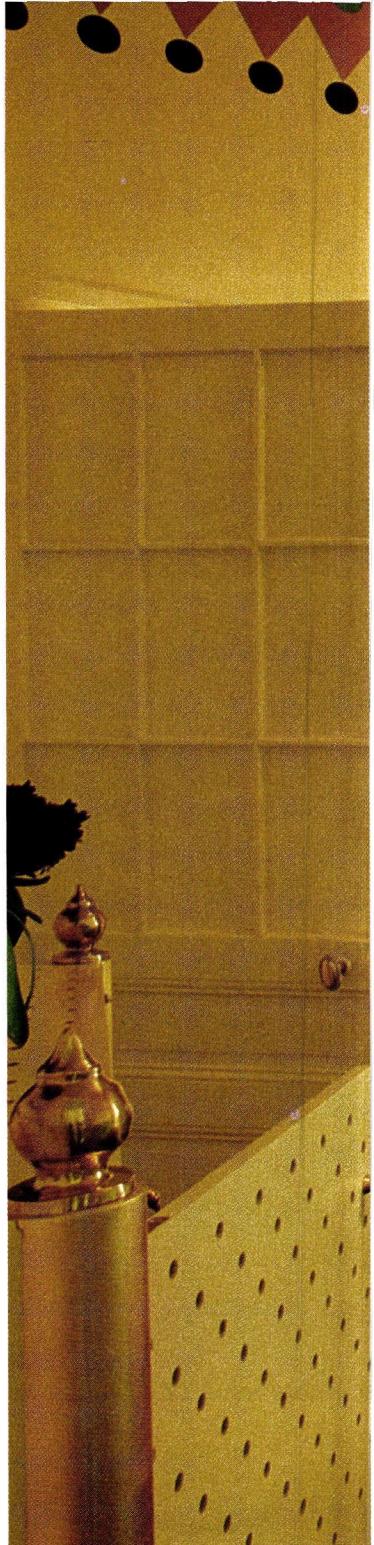
**T**here's a certain joyful insouciance to Bonetti and Garouste's new Lacroix boutique, adjacent to the salon, for example. Its sand-filled windows and seashell-motif display racks suggest nothing so much as a day at the beach. Blond wood furniture, sprightly striped carpets, and rough stucco walls drenched in saffron yellow and sizzling pink add to the Mediterranean mood, which Bonetti deems appropriate "because Christian comes from those parts."

"A world of luxury, of yachts and jets" was the inspiration for another recent project, a tiny breakfast room for an American tycoon's Paris pied-à-terre. There's a tinge of Hollywood to the furniture the partners designed for the minuscule space. One can imagine Betty Boop nibbling on a croissant here amid the tongue-in-cheek glamour of ivory-



FROM LEFT: ALEXANDRE BAILHACHE (2);  
JACQUES DIRAND; JEAN-PIERRE BUEL

**M**anuel Canovas asked Bonetti and Garouste to design a special installation, far left, to help promote his fabric house's new *Vive Alma* flowered chintz at Paris's Biennale des Éditeurs in January, and the designers answered with the enchanting *Sleeping Beauty's Chamber*. Left: The silk flowers on the gilded twig chair are from Trousselier, Paris.



**A**s compact as a ship's cabin, as festive as a circus tent, Bonetti and Garouste's most recent project is a Hollywood-in-the-fifties-style breakfast room, above, for an American art collector's pied-à-terre in Paris.

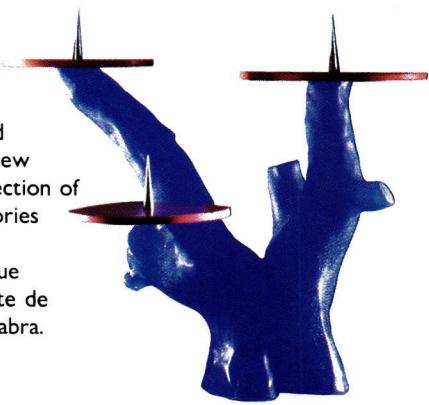


painted furniture with gold leaf detailing and gilded bronze finials.

But surely the most seductive sign of Bonetti and Garouste's new aesthetic direction is *Sleeping Beauty's Chamber*, a temporary installation commissioned by Manuel Canovas to display a new flowered chintz for his fabric house. The dreamy mise en scène featured a moss-covered chaise longue, which had to be misted every night, and an unlikely chorus of pert lit-

tle ballroom chairs made of broken tree branches. Perhaps Michael Steinberg, president of New York's Furniture of the Twentieth Century—distributor of the designers' furniture, lamps, and carpets in the U.S.—was onto something when he noted, in a sudden fit of poetic inspiration, "Bonetti and Garouste design for the magical hours of dawn and dusk—they personify our lingering need for enchantment." ▀ *Editor: Deborah Webster*

**B**onetti and Garouste's new Trapani collection of table accessories for Daum includes a blue and coral pâte de verre candelabra.





# THE HANDS OF TIME

*The varied treasures of an American's Paris apartment reveal a fascination with the enigmatic encounter*

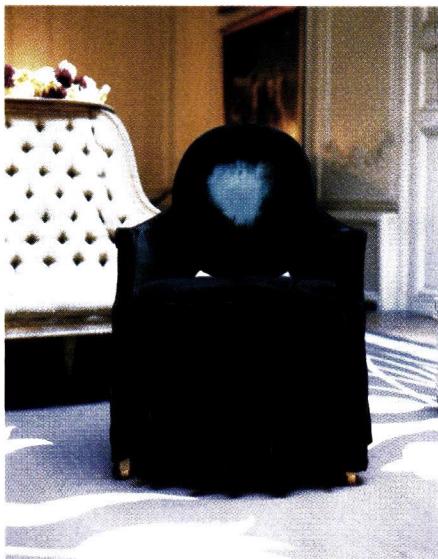
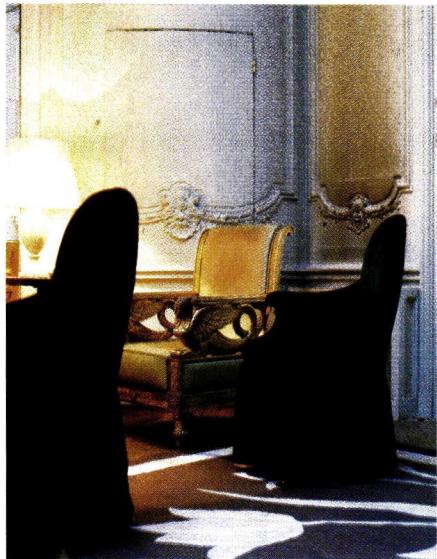
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*By INGRID SISCHY*

*Photographs by JEAN KALLINA*

In the living room a 19th-century Louis XVI Revival round sofa, or borne, raises a bouquet above a modern floral carpet by Ernest Boiceau. Opposite: Her back to an 18th-century Venetian mirror frame, an Empire maiden confronts a photograph of Camille Pissarro painting.





## *He has always been attracted to a decorating style he calls “ghost chasing”*

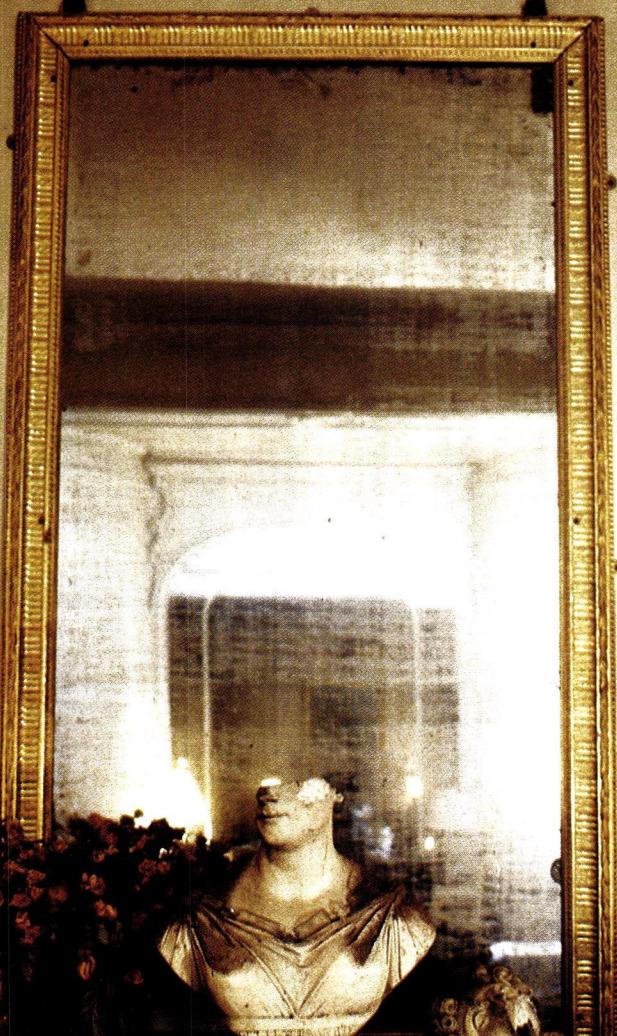
The apartment is in an elegant section of Paris, not in the bleak English marsh country of *Great Expectations*, and the clocks have not stopped at twenty to nine as they did at Miss Havisham's, yet when people talk about this house, they bring up Dickens's haunted setting. So with a nod toward the other side of the channel let's call the owner Mr. H. It is only to be expected that a man who has cut the labels out of his articles of clothing would also prefer to have his identity cut out of a magazine article about his house. You might think he'd object to the idea that his remarkable two-level apartment reminds people of a place Dickens described as a cobwebby sun-deprived ruin, but on the contrary I suspect Mr. H. is the one who started this ironic comparison. It's a shorthand way of emphasizing atmosphere, mood, and history over price and status and fads, none of which impress him. Things work the other way around. He influences.

Mr. H., who spends most of his time in New York, comes from the school that believes in downplaying one's possessions. He calls his place a "junk-picker's apartment," but in fact it's filled with amazing finds. Most of the contents would make curators in both the decorative and the fine arts kick themselves for missing what he discovered at his favorite secondhand shops. He says he prefers shops to museums. One of his chief delights used to be Comoglio's on the rue Jacob, now sadly gone but once a sort of antiquarian's heaven—or, as John Richardson put it, "that moth-eaten place of wonders." Since almost everything in the apartment comes from one antiques shop or another and since I know that Mr. H.'s occupation keeps him busy day and night, I was curious about how he found the time to amass all these treasures. He clearly had to comb many a jumbled-up joint. When I asked if he did it by just walking from shop to shop to shop, he corrected me: "I raced. All this stuff was collected

between appointments for more important things: you know, work. I got it by dashing in and dashing out of flea markets. I'd say it was decorated by accident and instinct." And by the radar that only the true collector possesses.

Mr. H.'s extrasensory antennae have led him to some extra-special prizes. In his apartment you come across furniture and objects and paintings that are not only marvelous period pieces but are almost magical because of where they've been, whom they've seen, what they've heard—in other words, because of their provenance. Hanging above a set of Italian Empire consoles and lit by a pair of alabaster urns Mr. H. transformed into lamps is a turn-of-the-century gem—a carved bat that once belonged to Comte Robert de Montesquiou, the epitome of Belle Époque aestheticism. Montesquiou's bat doesn't just conjure the spookiness and jeweled creepy crawlly creatures of the arts of the fin de siècle; it brings on a whole parade of associations. One thinks of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (Proust modeled the Baron de Charlus in large part after Montesquiou) and of Whistler, that snob who painted the portrait of Montesquiou in the Frick Collection—a picture that exudes such a sniffing superiority it clearly records a perfect match between artist and subject. As Philippe Jullian tells us in his biography of Montesquiou, Whistler would address the count in letters as "Dear Bat" and refer to himself as "the butterfly."

The sphinx armrest of a 19th-century Neoclassical fauteuil crouches behind Louis XVI-style chairs, above left, and center, with dark dustcovers made in the 1930s to an 18th-century design. Above right: A painted Neoclassical seat and stool. Opposite: A Directoire bust atop twin Italian consoles. The carved bat over the mirror once belonged to Comte Robert de Montesquiou, celebrated aesthete of the Belle Époque.





Mr. H. has seen his own share of social butterflies. He also has a great appreciation for what conformists call "battiness." He has a history of being the first on the block to recognize a visionary. He's a great believer in imagination and fantasy, and he has used plenty of both to create his Paris interiors. "I'll make up whole stories about a room when I'm doing a place," he says, "about the people who lived there." He is especially fond of literary types. He had lots of material to work with here—the apartment's previous owner was Violet Trefusis. Although she may be remembered as a third-rate writer, Trefusis played a major role in the literary romances of her era—namely as one of Vita Sackville-West's lovers (and as the nemesis of Sackville-West's husband, Harold Nicolson)—no doubt spicing the apartment's allure for Mr. H. As he tells of his sense that she haunts the place, he smiles and elaborates: "When I first saw the apartment, all her things were still around, including some old pictures of Edward VII, who they say was her father—a detail she enjoyed promoting."

By the time he bought the apartment in 1973, it had fallen into disrepair. The rooms needed quite a bit of gutting and construction as well as delicate restoration—the filling in of broken paneling and molding, for example. In addition, Mr. H. made changes—such as making all the doorways taller—that now look so right you'd never know they were alterations. This talent for arranging things as though they belong in a room is rare, but Mr. H. has it to spare. He's not stiff about placement; he goes at it loosely, as though he's doing a dance with the furniture, the "hokeypokey" as he calls it. "You get a hunch, you move the

piece around, you shake it all about." And he doesn't spoil a room's choreography with too many steps. "Knowing when to stop is the trick," he says, lamenting all the artists who "would have come so close if only they had known when to stop."

Listening to Mr. H. talk about his place and the eras and people that haunt it is a hypnotic experience. He is so full of knowledge and so undry about it all; in fact, he's very wry. About a piece of sculpture he muses, "That's from Molière's garden. I usually keep the top of her head on, or do I take it off? I don't remember." A set of Louis XVI-style chairs that Mr. H. says "look like strange widows" take us back to *Great Expectations*, to the first time Pip comes home from Miss Havisham's—that monument to forsaken brides—and his sister and uncle cross-question him about what he's seen. Convinced that no one would understand any of it if he told the truth, Pip says, "She was sitting in a black velvet coach." Mr. H.'s chairs have little gold feet, not wheels, and the eighteenth-century-style dustcovers that shroud them are velvet, but not black. The chairs once belonged to Misia Sert, and their original covers were made out of dress fabric around 1931 by Coco Chanel. But, even for Mr. H., these covers were approaching the (*Text continued on page 167*)

**B**as-relief carvings ornaments the shaft of an early 19th century column clock, above left. Above right: The upholstered Moderne-inspired bed was designed by the owner. The Man Ray above the headboard belongs to a friend. Opposite: Two Classical scenes attributed to Girodet hang behind a giltwood Louis XVI sofa by Jacob.



**N**icholas Worms's 19th-century retreat, below. Right: In one of two salons, sofa, fauteuil crapaud, curtains, and walls are dressed in fabric from Braquenié.

The painted leather-topped table is 18th century French.

Details see Resources.



# NORMAN RETREAT

*Investment banker Nicholas Worms finds tranquillity in a country house in Normandy*

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*By RHODA KOENIG*

*Photographs by FRANÇOIS HALARD*





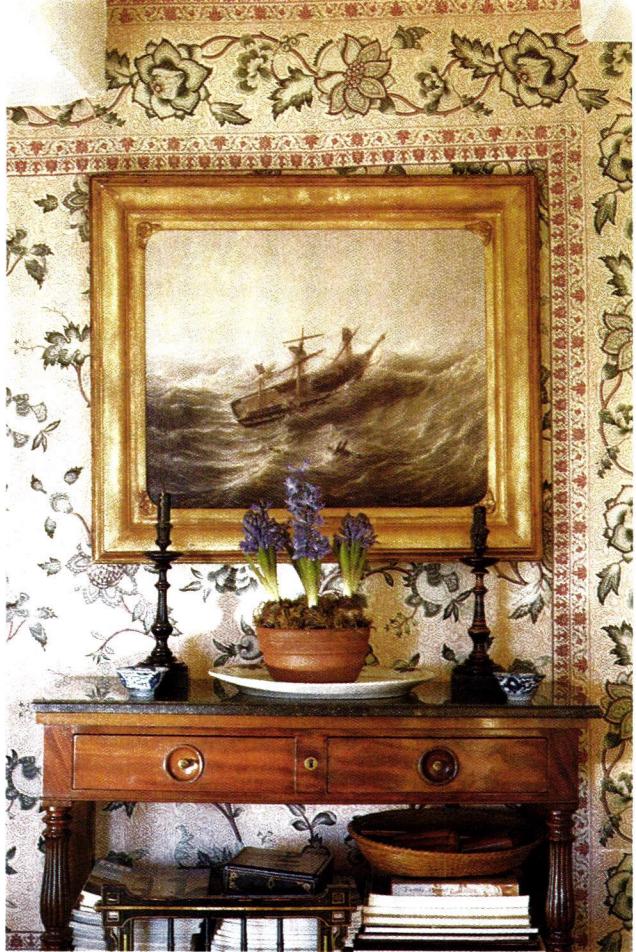




In the racehorse and dairy region of Normandy where England is only an hour away, Anglo-French banker Nicholas Clive Worms has his *maison de charme*, an English idea of a French country house. After the stress of business in Paris, says Worms, he likes to retreat from his "fairly formal" flat in a Louis XIV town house on the Left Bank and read a book before the log fire, following a dinner of grilled fish that, coming from the nearby coast, is "absolutely fresh-fresh." The modesty of the place is contrary to the substance but appropriate to the style of the man a French financier characterizes as "extremely discreet, a master of the aesthetic takeover bid. While other people fight it out, he tends to do it intravenously." One recent weekend Worms was relaxing after the strain of acquiring an insurance company for less than the asking price; he got it for what he considers a reasonable \$1 billion.

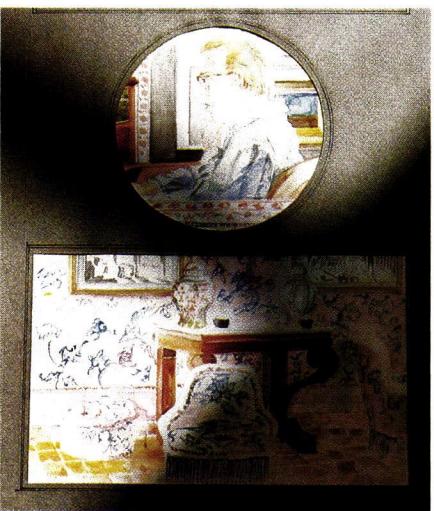
The son of an Englishman of diplomatic background—Worms's grandfather was ambassador to Japan—and of a daughter of a distinguished French banking family, Worms describes himself as a product of the Entente Cordiale. His first seven years were spent in Buckinghamshire, where his father was a gentleman farmer; then he went to Le Rosey and the Institut d'Études Politiques before taking up his career at Banque Worms, founded by his French grandfather in 1928. "They always say you must go away and become a great success and come back as the boss, but I did the contrary really," he says. When the bank, like that of his country neighbor, Guy de Rothschild, was nationalized in 1981, Worms—who had taken his mother's patronymic to carry on the family name—formed Worms et Cie Finance, a shipping, insurance, and investment banking firm. When he speaks, the illusion of talking to an old public school boy shivers just occasionally, as when he says that one of his ancestors was painted by "Raynolds" or that his cottage is a good place for spending Christmas and New Year eating "troofles." A bachelor, Worms does not pay regular visits to his hideaway because he doesn't "believe in the weekend thing, unless you leave your wife in the country during the week to have the fires burning when you arrive."

Sporadic visits also mean a low-maintenance garden—"It's hardly a garden really, because it all grows by itself." Two



In the other salon, left, the pouf, canapé, *crapauds*, and armchair, covered in Braquenié fabric, are Napoleon III. Above: Also in the salon the console is 19th century French, the candlesticks 19th century English.

ivy-covered pear trees flank the house, cherry trees stand at the gate, and a few roses climb the wall outside the dining room. The 1823 timbered farmhouse required considerable work in 1976, however, when Worms took it to pieces and put it together again, after clearing out the rot and shifting the front door. "It's like a Meccano set—you can do whatever you want." Each of the three upstairs bedrooms was given its own bathroom, but in a way that did not alter the exterior walls. Instead of cutting out windows for the bathrooms, Worms put in new walls which divided each of the back windows vertically. An exterior feature was left in place to provide a remedy against a problem for which post-1823 technology still has no solution: between the two stories a second row of eaves runs along one side of the house to prevent the wet west wind from beating against the walls and making the timbers swell against the plaster. It is a de-



**A** watercolor portrait of Nicholas Worms and the salon, above, both by Guy de Rougemont. Above right: The 1840s French *lit bateau* with matching marquetry nightstand. Bed and walls covered with Braquené fabric. Below right: Above a converted marble bakery counter, 19th-century vase drawings. Coffee service is 19th-century *trompe l'oeil* from Michel Galabert, Paris. Bowl is contemporary Chinese.

vice much needed in this famously damp province where, as Worms quotes a local saying, "if you can see Le Havre, it's because it's going to rain; if you can't see it, it's because it's raining."

**S**ince the house is built flat on the earth, a small timbered outbuilding serves as an aboveground wine cellar; another former farm shed contains the central-heating apparatus. At the bottom of the garden stands the cottage's cottage, a two-bedroom guesthouse whose Dutch door is not an architectural whim but a remnant of its previous existence as a stable. Barnyard creatures are not far away: you can lie in the ground-floor bath and be face-to-face with the cows next door.

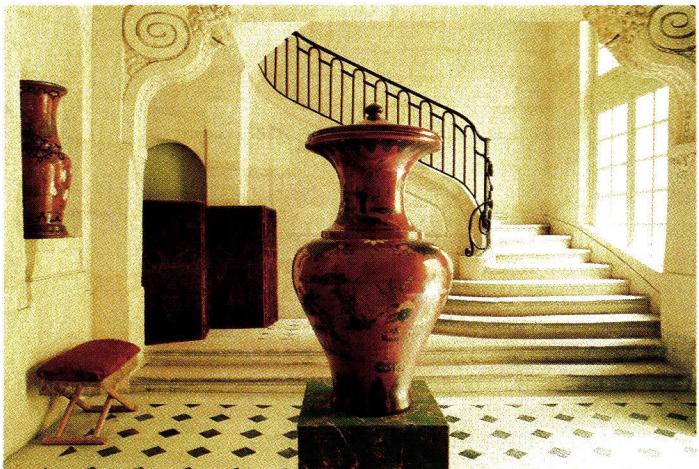
To help with the decoration, Worms enlisted Vincent Fourcade, who had to deal with the problems inherent in cozy country cottages. The house, Worms explains, is, like others of that place and time, only four meters wide because the local trees used for beams grew no taller. This meant that lighting, to save space, was mounted on the walls. Nor were all the walls the same length and height. To make that less obvious, Fourcade fixed boldly patterned Braquené fabric—the French equivalent of chintz—to the sitting room walls, further muddling the eye with borders in a contrasting pattern to the Indian crewelwork-inspired design. The low ceilings were not left the traditional dark brown but painted white, terra-cotta, or turquoise.

The wall fabric also covers a small sofa and three chairs—"I think we paid fifty quid for them at the Marché aux Puces." The rest of the furnishings are small nineteenth-century pieces—tables topped with gray marble and needlepoint-covered chairs. The mixture is spiced with some bits of chinoiserie—a pagoda-painted end table and two "fairly decent" pink and green Chinese export porcelain garden seats that take the place of a coffee table. "I'm not sure the chap who sold them didn't pretend they weren't eighteenth century," says Worms in a burst of triple negatives that may be English-diffident or French-discreet. Color-coordinated hyacinths sprout from straw baskets or nests of pinecones, and four savage puppies—Brazilian woodcarvings—glower toothily from a corner. Upstairs, a couple in a print of the same vintage as the house peer at Virgil's tomb, and a small portrait depicts Worms's (Text continued on page 167)





In the dining room the large circular English table seats ten. The French chairs are from an old convent.



# ROYAL LINEAGE

*In the town house of Louis XIV's architect, decorator Jacques Garcia's apartment recalls the majesty of Versailles*

*By G. Y. DRYANSKY*

*Photographs by FRANÇOIS HALARD*

*Produced by MARIE-PAULE PELLÉ*

The small sitting room, right, in the 17th-century hôtel particulier of royal architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart was used by Madame Mansart as her study. Behind a gilt Louis XVI armchair from the theater at Versailles, the doorway reveals an enfilade through the former bedroom of the duchesse de Mouchy, lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette. Above: Stone lion-head brackets preside over the entry. Urns are 18th-century German porcelain. Details see Resources.







**F**lanked by ebonized cabinets designed by Garcia, a modern niche in the small sitting room, above, houses an 18th-century German earthenware stove. A porcelain basin that belonged to Chateaubriand is between a pair of 17th-century embroidered damask screens. The Aubusson carpet was made for Louis XVI. Opposite: In the main salon, an oval portrait of the Sun King by Pierre Mignard hangs against a tapestry designed by Charles Le Brun, who painted the allegorical ceiling. The overmantel is new, as are the sofas Garcia designed after one made for Louis XIV's dauphin, subject of another Mignard portrait right of the chimney-piece. The giltwood armchair belonged to the dauphin. Savonnerie carpets are from a set commissioned for the Louvre in the 17th century. Below: Jacques Garcia, in his "cozy museum."

Jacques Garcia was a little put out: Capucine and Clémentine, his schnauzers, had eaten all the ermine off one of his sofas. "It's a little sad, n'est-ce pas?" the decorator said, "without the ermine."

Ermine, as everyone knows, doesn't grow on trees. Ermine is royal. Literally royal. For centuries it was reserved for kings and popes, and nowadays it doesn't even turn up at fur auctions. Garcia had found a bagful of ermine tails at some sale, and with his own hands he'd sewn this eventual dog food onto a "little nothing" Napoleon III sofa along with the hide of a leopard that family lore attributed to a shoot his grandfather had done in Africa. Garcia told the story merrily; he was not all that put out. The anecdote enriched the humorous associations of the sofa. This piece, he explained, was basically a joke, a bit of willful bad taste, without which so-called good taste was bourgeois and boring. I listened carefully because Jacques Garcia, though he's just a youngish 41, is the Paris insider's decorator, known in his field as today's utmost embodiment of French Good Taste.

That sofa was indeed almost nothing in this apartment of Garcia's, an aesthetic blip compared with the symphony of things truly precious, totally royal, everywhere we turned. The rug at our feet, in his principal sitting room, was a piece of one of 93 Savonnerie carpets Louis XIV had ordered for the Louvre, some of which he

installed at Versailles. It was, Garcia pointed out in passing, "the zenith of good taste." Nearby was a chair made for Louis XIV's son. Near that was one of a set of chairs, originally silver-leaved, that had belonged to the Sun King. Garcia's entry was sheltered from drafts by fleur de lis-patterned hangings from the Palais des Tuilleries. The onyx Roman busts in the hall came from the collection of Talleyrand. They originally belonged to—whom else?—Louis XIV. And so on and on.

Garcia's apartment in the Marais occupies the piano nobile of the town house that one of the greatest of France's royal architects and a major designer of Versailles, Jules Hardouin-Mansart, built for himself. From whatever Palladian palace in the sky good architects go to, Mansart might have looked down on the two of us in his house as if we were a couple of schnauzers—Garcia in suede slippers and an unbuttoned button-down shirt, me in an old tweed jacket. He might have wondered what we were doing there with all that.

I had come to try to understand two of Paris's rare phenomena, this place—which strangers in the know write pleading letters to visit—and this man. What Garcia was doing there was more complicated—it is his apartment, but not quite: he only sort of dwells there. (He also sometimes lets strangers visit.) He calls the place I saw his "cozy museum" and lives principally upstairs, where whatever is precious among the ordinary is just a table by Eileen Gray, some thirties objects. "I'm of a simple nature," he told me. He likes to come downstairs to the museum and give occasional dinner parties or eat alone in the kitchen. Or he'll work there a little and communicate with the ghosts whose taste he understands better than anyone and whose fortunes have made his own possible.

The son of a provincial engineer, Jacques Garcia entered elegant Paris from way outside, but his market penetration as a decorator is a deep deep pinpoint. He does just a dozen or so houses or apartments a year, usually for French clients who tend to be silently rich and self-assured—sure of their taste but without Garcia's subtle, myopic, and encyclopedic understanding of objects of great genius. Until recently, he never had an American client, but now he is creating a copy of the Château de Champs in Texas for someone whose name he won't reveal. The Château de Champs, Madame de Pompadour's cas-







A trompe l'oeil figure of Hercules surveys the reception room under a ceiling painted by Delafosse and Michel Corneille. Within a colonnade of faux pilasters, which appear to support the 17th-century bas-relief cornice, Garcia has arranged pedestals for busts of the same period—the pair at right are copies of ancient Roman sculptures from Louis XIV's collection. The terra-cotta planters were molds for silver urns that held orange trees at Versailles. Cross-legged stools were reserved for duchesses at the court of Louis XIV. Fleur de lis-patterned hangings survived the fire that destroyed the Palais des Tuilleries in 1871.



tle, copied in Texas? Pastiche? Garcia doesn't wince at the implicit accusation. "I adore pastiche!" he said. "Well-done pastiche is fantastic. Versailles is totally pastiche. Everything's been redone. There's nothing old left at Versailles except for the stones behind the paneling."

Garcia's way with old treasures is a mixture of reverence and audacity. Unadulterated reverence he finds deadening. His gray plastic telephone and a heap of papers related to work sit on a table facing the bed in a room where the duchesse de Mouchy, lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette, had lived during the reign of Louis XVI. (The duchess, he pointed out, had done worse mischief. Presaging a current vice, she put in a false ceiling.) In Mansart's reception room, Garcia's main sitting room, there is a carved and gilded Boulle guéridon as delicate as anything the master ébéniste ever created. "Someone else would put it on a pedestal between two spotlights," Garcia said. He has heaped bibelots, lamps, and ashtrays on it. In the midst of all his wonders Garcia never forgets to put in the "nothings"—the lamps which are of no period but give light. Through erudition, instinct, and passion, he has developed the kind of intimacy with great things that allows him to jostle them a little with his own creative presence. Creativity in a grand decorator means using old things in new ways. What makes Garcia follow through notably on his imagination and learning is strong technique. "He was born with a sense of classic proportions," the auctioneer Étienne Libert told me, "and he can do upholstery and cabinetmaking with his own two

(Text continued on page 166)

**E**xcept for a 17th-century ceiling by Mignard, the appointments of the duchesse de Mouchy's bedroom date primarily from the reign of Louis XVI. He is portrayed in the painting at left, above a Houdon bust. The duchess herself commissioned the friezes over the doors in 1775. Garcia has draped taffeta on the gilt frame of a *lit à la polonoise* by Jacob. The mahogany Riesener desk is accompanied by a bergère by Sené. A Neoclassical clock and figurines in biscuit de Sèvres rest above and in front of leather-covered file drawers that once held papers of the economist Turgot. The carpet, also late 18th century, was woven in Smyrna.





# WORKROOM

## The French Touch

For a sumptuous tassel or a perfectly upholstered chair, Paris is the place  
By Christopher Petkanas

In a perfect world one would move into a great house (Elsie de Wolfe's Villa Trianon is my idea of a great house), then call in the experts to wave their saws and hammers. Among these highly specialized artisans there would be someone with the skills to copy that beautiful but rather too ratty-looking yard of nineteenth-century sofa fringe, another craftsman to reproduce the long-missing hardware on a set of French doors, and someone else who would know just what you meant by the ideal reading lamp.

The very good news from Paris is that the sofa fringe, door handles, and reading lamp are waiting to be ordered. From passementerie to upholstery, cabinetmaking to metalworking, bookbinding to gilding, France in 1989 is a country of crafts, one that puts a decoratively perfect world within reach.

**Rebel bookbinder Jean de Gonet, left, explores new materials and modes of construction. Below and bottom: Volumes bound in rubber and yew wood.**

A vintage frame, right, exhibits new gleam at Pierre and Patrick Maury's gilding studio. Inset: Pierre Maury sharpens relief work before applying a layer of gold.

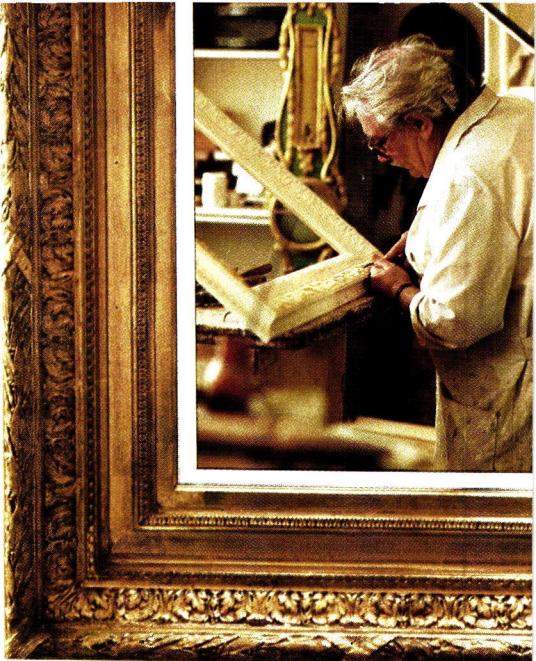
### BOOKBINDING

When the French navy took on Jean de Gonet in 1971 as a restorer of its historical bookbindings, they had no idea they were employing a rebel. On his own six years later, Gonet challenged the tenets of contemporary bookbinding by doing away with rounded leather spines and exposing the ribs that serve as a backbone for sewn signatures of pages. His solution to the problem of where to put the title and author on his stripped-down books was shocking in the way it skirted all ceremony: stuck on the covers were plain labels inspired by those on cans of conserves.

Gonet explores new materials with the same vigor that he explores new modes of construction. At Artefacts, the company he founded in 1986, most books are bound in RIM (reaction injection mold), an extraordinarily resilient black rubberlike plastic traditionally used for car bumpers. Gonet also frequently produces one-of-a-kind bindings. Chanel, for instance, commissioned him to create a stamped design for the archives in its perfume laboratory. It is also possible to walk in off the street with your favorite title and have it covered in a stock RIM pattern for as little as \$85.

In addition to his work with RIM, Gonet collaborates with small prestigious publishing houses on minuscule editions that bring cosmic prices. Three years ago Kaldewey, a small publishing house in Poestenkill, New York, issued ten copies of his startling and luxurious presentation of Marguerite Duras's *Hiroshima mon amour: Synopsis* at \$2,800 each. One of these volumes was recently auctioned in Germany for \$10,000. Gonet fashioned the edition's pliant covers out of mottled gray suede, then fastened them between thin strips of wood at the edge of the spine. Leather laces tie the covers to the pages, and a length of metal is attached to the outside edge of the volume with metal grommets.

What fuels Gonet is a horror of the conventions of his métier. Leather bores him—unless it is panels of untreated hide laminated to imitate wood or exotic woods that have been worked to resemble leather. RIM was also designed to tweak and to make bookbinding more accessible. "My goal is to provoke a new commercial attitude," says Gonet, adding that he will know he has succeeded when people drop off books for binding the same way they drop off film for developing. The returns, in the meantime, are very encouraging. One of the things customers like most about his books is that they don't spring shut when opened, a simple function of the fact that the RIM covers are laminated to a





For my 30th birthday,  
I treated myself to an original Monet.

For my marriage to Simone,  
I purchased a villa on the Côte d'Azur.

For the birth of my firstborn,  
I sent chocolate cigars to half of Paris.

To commemorate my country's 200th birthday,  
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An extraordinary event, after all,  
calls for an extraordinary celebration.



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**WATERMAN**  
PARIS

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# WORKROOM

leather spine instead of being wrapped all the way around. For a wildly futuristic home library, they are just the thing. (Jean de Gonet Artefacts, 8 rue Édouard-Lockroy, 75011 Paris; 43-38-06-57)

## GILDING

With a combined 54 years of golden experience, gilders Pierre and Patrick Maury are regularly called upon to revive fading luster. Decorator François Catroux dispatched them to brighten up the cornices in the library at Hôtel Lambert, the Paris perch of Guy and Marie-Hélène de Rothschild. And when someone at the residence of the Canadian ambassador to France noticed that the boiseries weren't exactly gleaming, in came the Maury's.

The father-and-son team's other principal activity is the restoration of antique gilded frames and furniture as well as the fabrication of new frames, whether modern or copies of vintage designs. Drawing on a library of 200–300 sulfur, plaster, and silicone molds, they are able to replace the chipped-off rosette on a Jacob bergère or the scrollwork on a Louis XVI fauteuil.

The gilding process as performed by the Maury's is long and painstaking. Ten coats of a mixture of whiting (ground and washed calcium carbonate) and mucilage (rabbit skin melted with water) are layered on every article. Pumice is next passed over the surface to remove streaks that might show through the gold, followed by a light rubbing with fine sandpaper to remove any remaining grit or grease. If a new stretch of beading, say,

has been added to the border of an old picture frame, it is at this point that it is picked out in greater relief using small tools not unlike those on a dentist's tray.

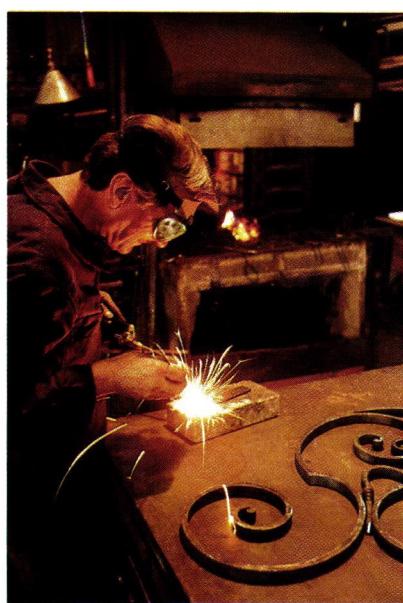
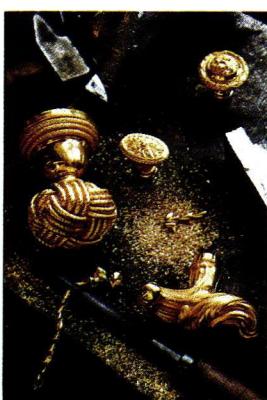
Before any gilding can take place, the frame must first be washed over with an



At Gomond, specialists in ornamental trimmings, a craftsman, above, spins spools of colored thread onto a core of cotton to make cable. Left and above left: A sampling of tassels.

ocher solution to give it a yellow base and coated with a predominantly clay mixture to receive the feathery leaves of gold, which are positioned with a small brush. Methylated spirits diluted with water is the adhering agent. "One thousand leaves measuring eight centimeters square and containing a total of eighteen grams of gold cost about \$1 each," reports Patrick Maury. "My wife, Chantal, is the actual *doreuse*, the person who poses the leaves, and my mother, Zelia, runs the shop where we receive customers. It's a family affair." (Maury, 4 rue du Pas-de-la-Mule, 75003 Paris; 48-87-95-89. Atelier: 47 rue Saint-Sabin, 75011 Paris; 43-38-22-12)

**Door, window, and stair hardware, below and bottom, custom-made at Meilleur, a family-run metalworking business. Below right: Forging iron in the firm's smithy.**

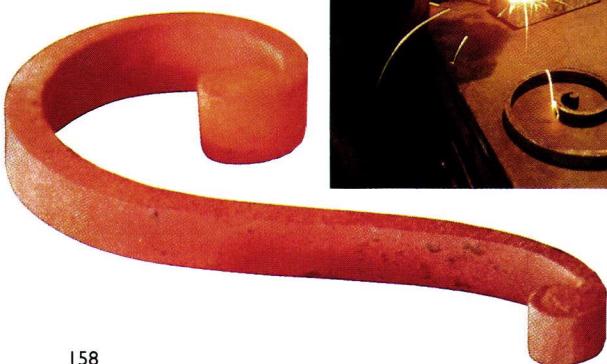


## METALWORK

"If it's metal and in the realm of decoration, we make it," says Daniel Meilleur, whose father founded the company that bears the family name. Meilleur's 27-year-old daughter, Catherine, joined the business three years ago, ensuring the production of the firm's scrupulously crafted lamps, soap dishes, shower heads, side tables, balustrades, and doorknobs into the next century.

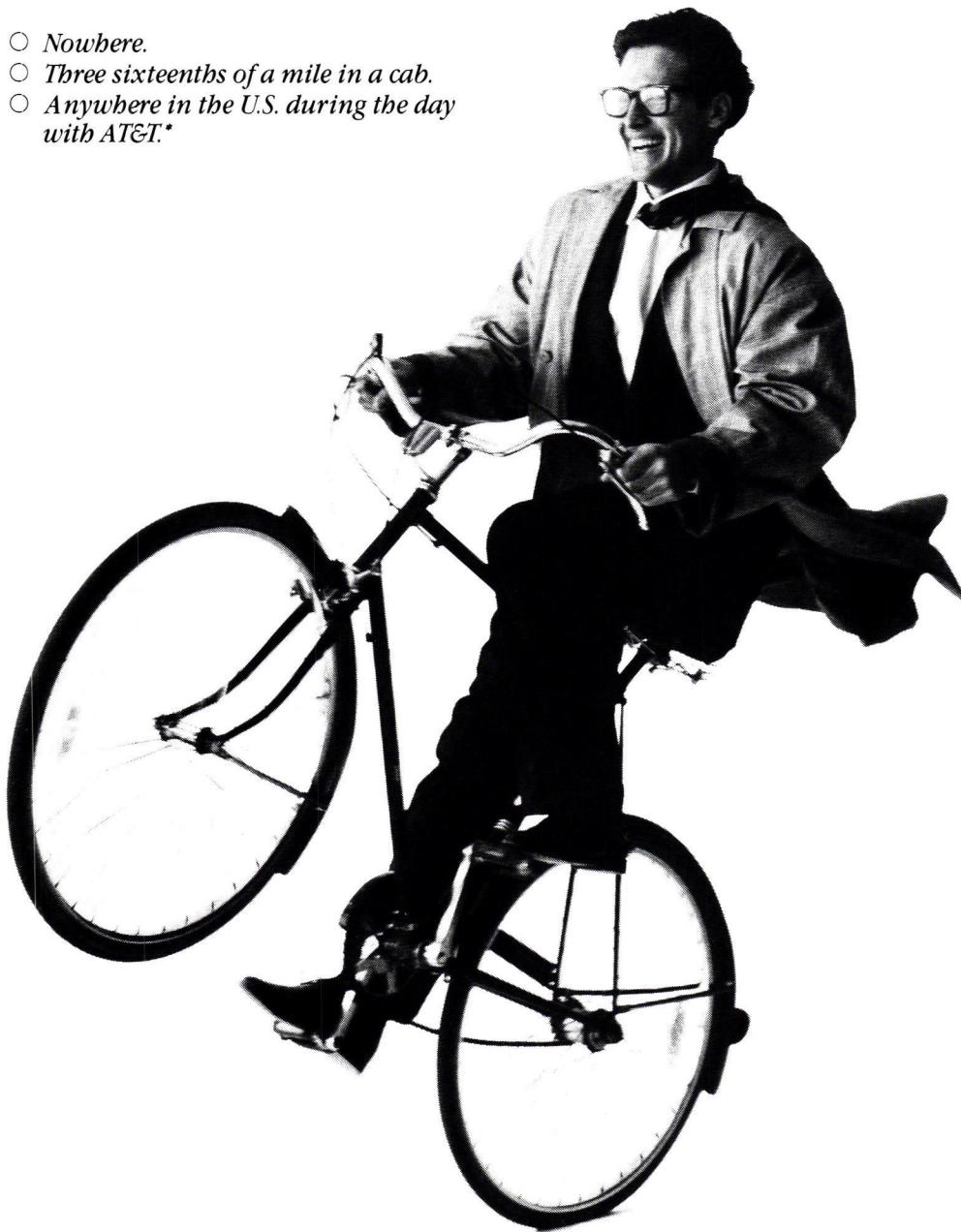
"In this kind of work," says Meilleur, "we are dependent on a long chain of artisans, each with his own specialty. It takes up to nine pairs of hands to make an object in bronze, including the designer, the modelist sculpting in plaster or wood, the founder, the chaser, the turner, the assembler, the decorator who polishes and gilds or oxidizes, plus the checker or verifier. And since fewer and fewer people are interested in learning the art of metalworking, there is always the threat of a missing link."

Meilleur accepts commissions from private clients, notably a string of Rothschilds and Guinesses, decorators from MAC II to Peter Marino, antiques dealers like Didier Aaron, and the French state. Over the past decade he has restored or replaced the locks and



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## WORKROOM

window bolts in the Palais de Fontainebleau apartments of Napoleon. For the Musée Carnavalet in Paris, Meilleur is currently working on the reconstruction of the turn-of-the-century Fouquet jewelry shop designed by Alphonse Mucha. Private clients come to Meilleur for hurricane lamps and lanterns that are historically exact apart from their materials. In the mid nineteenth century, hallway and door lanterns were made of rather perishable tin. Meilleur's, in brass, bronze, and plain or painted copper, defy time.

"The great epoch for bronze, brass, and iron was the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth," he says. "Because of the demand it was possible to produce items in quantities. Now, with the market diminished, we have gone back to the piece-by-piece way metal was handworked in the seventeenth century. What we're selling today is workmanship." (Meilleur, 32 rue des Amandiers, 75020 Paris; 43-66-45-13)

### PASSEMENTERIE

If he had the chance forty years ago, Bernard Gomond says he would have eagerly traded in his clacking wooden and copper looms, now more than a hundred years old, for anything that would have brought him a bit further into the industrial age. Gomond's frail equipment may be antique, but he now says it is unsurpassed for producing the kind of elaborate and sophisticated passementerie (furnishing trimmings) that decorators like Jean-Louis Riccardi, Alberto Pinto, and Jacques Grange demand. Four hours are needed to make about 22 yards of braided cable measuring three quarters of an inch in diameter. Although modern equipment is quicker, it does

An upholsterer, far right, stuffs the seat of an armchair with horsehair at Trade France. Right: An antique chair frame is restored.



not approach Gomond's for flexibility and pure inventiveness.

Gomond custom-dyes all the wool and silk that goes into making his tassels, tiebacks, twisted cord, fringe, rosettes, and ribbon bows. At their most ornamental, his confects look less like passementerie than they do the sugary folie of a master pastry chef. Among the clients for whom Gomond has done his most creative work are the French Ministry of Finances and the Musée Nissim de Camondo in Paris.

After 45 years in the trade and 30 years as the proprietor of his own company, Gomond's idea of the role his work performs in decoration hasn't changed. With no false modesty he insists "passementerie is an accompaniment." (Bernard Gomond, 35 rue Vaugelas, 75015 Paris; 48-28-18-18)

#### UPHOLSTERY

"I am the happy intermediary between decorators and French suppliers," says Jean-Charles Morinière, whose company Trade France works intimately with designers on every aspect of a job that involves textiles. In addition to the fabrication of curtains and the execution of state-of-the-art wall and furniture upholstery, Morinière's domain extends to related accessories, including passementerie and curtain rails. Working hand-in-glove with Verrier Frères for trimmings, and Veraseta and Burger for fabric, Trade France offers decorators what they want most: quality and exclusivity. "They come to me for designs that will be produced for them and them alone," says Morinière. "Virtually nothing we do is standard, and you won't find any of it on the marketplace."

Sofa and chair frames are made following Morinière's designs by an independent joiner then completed in Trade France's ateliers. For wall upholstery, the service for which the firm is most in demand, artisans are brought from France to the work site for as long as a month. Twelve Trade France craftsmen are employed full time in Paris, 25 in New York. In Manhattan alone Morinière's formidable know-how has brought him into collaboration with Jacques Grange on Paloma Picasso's showroom, with Thierry Despont on flats for Spyros and Philip Niarchos, and with Henri Samuel on the Fifth Avenue seat of John and Susan Gutfreund. With Vincent Fourcade he is working on no less than his

fourth house, this one in Southampton, for the restless Henry Kravis and Carolyne Roehm. Oscar de la Renta is among the private clients with whom he deals directly.

At all of these places Morinière did much more than just show up on time with the tassels and tiebacks. At Schloss Garatshausen, the candy-sweet Thurn und Taxis retreat outside Munich decorated by Pierre de Malleray, Morinière not only produced all 55 of the ex-

travagant window treatments, he also designed them. No two pairs of curtains in the little hunting palace are alike, and all have the meticulously hand-sewn seams that are a Trade France trademark. (Trade France, 35 rue des Petits-Champs, 75001 Paris; 42-97-44-28. In U.S.: Trade France, 247 East 50 St., New York, NY 10022; 212-758-8330. Margo Messic Gallery, 383 Cocoanut Row, Palm Beach, FL 33480; 407-833-8555) ▀

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# SOURCES

SAMPLES

## Fleur de Bees

French motifs cross the Atlantic and are bound for glory

By Eric A. Berthold

F

rench motifs abound in America this summer as designers appropriate the fleur de lis and Napoleon's bumblebee. The French lily, with its roots deeply embedded in history, was a sign of purity and has been used in decoration by royals for centuries. The bumblebee, a symbol of immortality and rebirth, was adopted in France during the sixth century by Chilperic I. Napoleon, not one to miss a political opportunity, embraced it as his own personal emblem in order to link himself with one of the nation's founding fathers. Bees were woven into textiles and upholstery and used throughout the Élysée Palace. Assembled here is a library of 25 best-sellers in silk, cotton, and horsehair. ♦



Shelved in an Empire bookcase from Philippe Farley, NYC, is a collection of French-inspired fabrics from Scalamandré, Gretchen Bellinger, André Bon, Laura Ashley, Duralee, Payne, Quadrille, Decorators Walk, Schumacher. Details see Resources.

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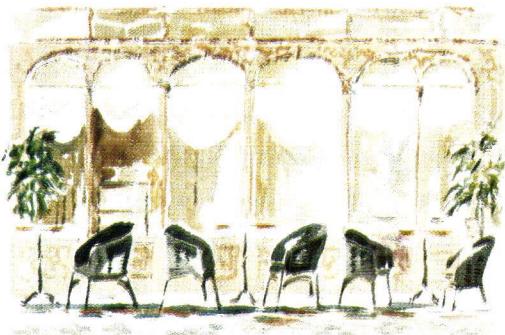
## SHOPPING

# Tunnel Visions

Covered passages faded by time are being resurrected for chic Parisians  
By Peter S. Green

In the midst of Paris's busy Right Bank business district, once-fashionable covered passageways and galleries are regaining their glory. More like indoor village streets than shopping malls, 25 such passages remain in Paris, most dating to the first half of the nineteenth century. Glass skylights are now being cleaned, and faux marbre and wooden storefronts are being restored as curious little shops preserved from an earlier era are joined by a new generation of shops focusing on fashion, decorative arts, and home furnishings.

All the passages mentioned are on the Right Bank. Hours vary, and shops are closed on Sunday and some on Monday as well.

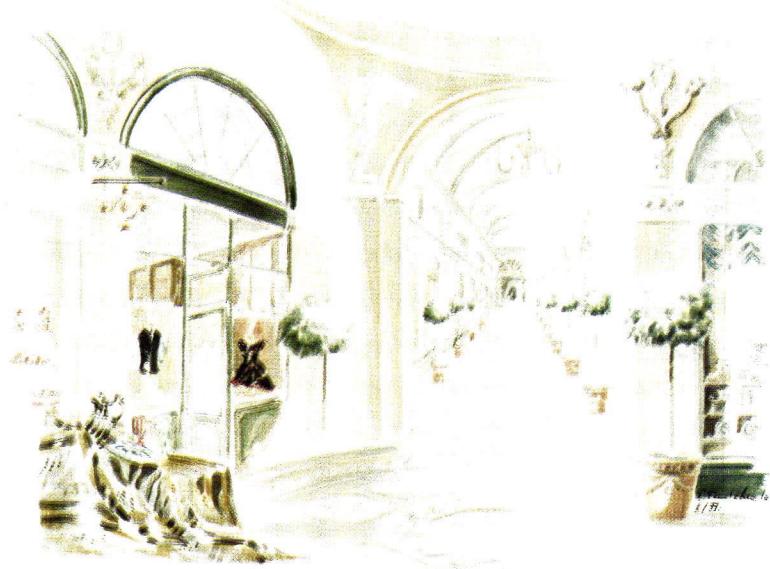


**L'Arbre à Canelle**, a perfect bistro/rest spot in Passage des Panoramas.

Jean-Paul Gaultier's ground-floor boutique and second-story design studios. (4 rue des Petits-Champs; 6 rue Vivienne)

**Wolff & Descourtis** As a child, Victoria Wolff learned to roller skate in the Galerie Vivienne, and now she has made her family's wholesale fabric business, founded in 1875, into Paris's *trouvaillerie* of choice for luxurious cashmeres, flannels in a half dozen tones, cottons, linens, and bolt after bolt of silk shantungs, angel skins, brocades, and jacquards, all in an extrawide 55 inches. Couturiers and in-the-know Parisians come for the personalized selection of the season's finest shawls and fabrics from Italy at affordable prices. (18 Galerie Vivienne; 42-61-80-84)

**Emilio Robba** A job in his family's fresh flower business led Beaux-Arts graduate Emilio Robba to create astonishingly realistic silk flowers. In Robba's sea-

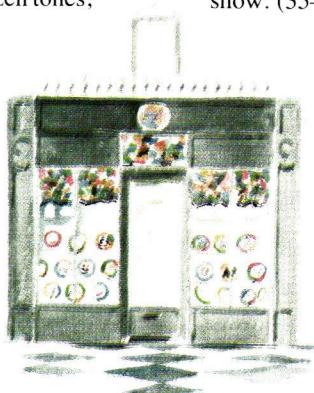


sonal collections of imitation and imaginary flowers, colors change from the center outward, pistils and stamens are finely detailed, and closed buds are scattered among the full blooms for a subtle overall effect. (29-33 Galerie Vivienne; 42-61-71-43)

**Lucien Legrand Fille & Fils** Francine Legrand (the "fille") extended her grandparents' ornate 1850s fine wines and comestibles shop on the rue de la Banque through a courtyard to a long storefront on the Galerie Vivienne. Pass through the cases of wine stacked waist-high on the gallery side and emerge into a richly decorated brass and mirrored shop redolent of the heavy aroma of coffee beans. The counters are lined with tall glass jars of old-fashioned candies such as striped *berlingots*. Regular customers include Minister of Culture Jack Lang, actor Pierre Arditi, and designer Philippe Starck. (60 Galerie Vivienne; 42-60-07-12)

**Casa Lopez** Installed here since 1983, Bernard Magniant's Casa Lopez has thrust needlepoint back into fashion with his handmade and machine-made rugs and upholstery. In addition to reversible woolen jacquard rugs, he carries printed canvas patterns for do-it-yourselfers, made-to-order needlepoint for upholstering chairs and gaming tables, and wall-size needlepoint rugs from Portugal. (32-36 Galerie Vivienne; 42-60-46-85)

**A Priori Thé** Transplanted New Yorker Peggy Hancock has kept this sweet tearoom since 1980. A half dozen tables spill into the passageway. The comfortable Lloyd Loom wicker chairs and the homemade fresh-fruit tarts, brownies, and *plats du jour* make this the perfect spot to take a break from shopping and watch the passing show. (35-37 Galerie Vivienne; 42-97-48-75)



### GALERIE VÉRO-DODAT

Two butchers, Mr. Véro and Mr. Dodat, opened this passage in 1826. The luxury of its brass trim, painted ceilings, and somber faux marbre façades peeking from beneath caked-on grime make it Paris's

**Façade de Céramique** most elegant, if faded, passageway. Legend has it that the at Galerie de la Madeleine. melancholic poet Gérard de

Nerval was last seen in a café here before being found hanged in his nearby garret. (2 rue du Boulo; 19 rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau)

**Robert Capia** A small card identifies the owner as a "Purchaser of furnishings, knickknacks, and curious objects." Actually, Capia is Paris's foremost authority on antique dolls and unofficial historian of the Galerie Véro-Dodat. The windows of his three storefronts are filled with turn-of-the-century toys, suspended ceramic angels, old Victrolas, toy prams, and hundreds of porcelain dolls. (26 Galerie Véro-Dodat; 42-36-25-94)

**Denicourt** Evelyne Ferrare commissions copper and hand-painted wood furnishings from workshops in her native Morocco. The pieces, which she designs, include mirrors adorned with mother-of-pearl, sideboards, screens, Koran stands embellished with holy verses, and trunks decoratively sculpted like tile-roofed houses. (19 rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau; 42-36-07-31)

**Anne Gaujac** White walls and carpet set off the large silk, wool, and cotton scarves and shawls at Anne Gaujac's shop. The fabrics bear both her own designs and re-impressions of eighteenth-century fabrics imported from India by the silk traders of Lyons. Her hand-blown champagne glasses, also available, were featured in the film *Dangerous Liaisons*. (16 Galerie Véro-Dodat; 42-33-50-87)

**Galerie Daniel Greiner** This gallery is a collector's source for eighteenth-century French architectural drawings. Unrealized fantasies for palaces and Italianate gardens fill the walls and racks. The exhibition and inventory change constantly. (14 Galerie Véro-Dodat; 42-33-43-30)

#### PASSAGE DES PANORAMAS

Built in 1799 by William Thayer, an American merchant, Passage des Panoramas is one of Paris's oldest surviving covered galleries. The high-peaked glass roof and many of the wooden façades remain from the mid nineteenth century when dandies would loiter in the cafés watching young women through dark glasses. Today it is a busy passageway, parallel to the narrow rue Vivienne. Little old shops of all sorts line its halls, and several bistros have survived, filled at lunch with workers from nearby offices. (10 rue Saint Marc; 11 blvd. Montmartre)

**L'Arbre à Canelle** Weary shoppers relax at one of the handful of tables before the Rococo façade of this restaurant, a former nineteenth-century chocolate factory. Owners Monique Bénady and Annie Michaut serve exquisite plats du jour like rabbit in tarragon

sauce and original quiches like a potato and confit of duck pie, plus a half dozen dessert tarts and teas. Original painted ceiling panels show the vanilla plants, tea bushes, coffee vines, and cinnamon trees that once supplied the chocolate shop. (57 Passage des Panoramas; 45-08-55-87)

#### PASSAGE JOUFFROY

Less elegant than the Passage des Panoramas across the street, stalls of used books line one entrance to the Passage Jouffroy, and a hotel and a wax museum sit atop the other. (10 blvd. Montmartre; 9 rue de la Grange-Batelière)

**M. G. Segas** Red velvet curtains and floor-length gilded mirrors set off a collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century walking sticks to warm the heart of any boulevardier. Dapper brothers Miguel and Gilbert Segas have a silver-tipped cane made from a manta ray's tail and a tremendous collection of trick canes, such as a gambler's cane with three small ivory dice in a glass handle; a cane whose handle becomes a pipe, cigar, or cigarette holder; and, for the older gentleman, a speaking-horn cane. Not to mention a veritable armory of lethal canes, including a shotgun and a range of swords and daggers. (34 Passage Jouffroy; 47-70-89-65)

**Abel** Similar and less expensive modern canes can be found next door at Abel, where Denise Marcin is one of Paris's last umbrella makers. (36 Passage Jouffroy; 47-70-03-37)

#### GALERIE DE LA MADELEINE

Between the place de la Madeleine and the rue Boissy-d'Anglas, stores turn their backs on this wide passage. Their painted-over windows leave only a few storefronts. (9 place de la Madeleine; 30 rue Boissy-d'Anglas)

**Céramique** Françoise Lemazou sells her own limited-edition Limoges porcelain plates and tableware bearing the designs of Jean Cocteau and Salvador Dali as well as contemporary artists, such as the seven-plate set by the seven young Paris painters known as the Frères

Ripoulin. Lucite salad bowls and trays inset with dried wildflowers and a variety of other porcelain and glass objects are also available. (42-65-75-70) ▲

The façade of the Galerie Véro-Dodat, Paris's most elegant passageway, is faux marbre.



## Starck Modern

(Continued from page 84) architects think they can design first for magazines and think after of the people who will live in that. My choice was not to make a show house for the magazines because that would have been absolutely dishonest in this case. You must stay humble; people must live there."

But not too humble. There's more than a hint of grandeur to this gray concrete monolith looming somewhat ominously above the Seine. It appears, as a matter of fact, to be

larger than life, perhaps because no conventional architectural nods to tradition adorn the façades, no sign of domesticity is in evidence. The house is abstract, scaleless. "The neighbors don't understand," laments Le Moult, echoing the age-old refrain of the progressive client.

"I have tried to design it to be more aristocratic, more like a castle—everything is very noble," notes Starck, who continued the theme of grandeur inside. Although the house is small, it feels vast, expansive, owing to an overscale double staircase and an almost entirely open plan in which living, dining, cooking, and sleeping all flow, with-

out visual obstruction, from one to another. (The only conventional room in the house is the daughters' bedroom.)

Since Starck is best known for his interior design work, it is ironic that he chose not to develop the interiors of the Le Moult house beyond the concrete-coated architectural envelope. Except for the kitchen and bathroom fittings, which are quite remarkable, the house is soothingly plain. With characteristic panache, Starck passes judgment on his first house: "It's not a masterpiece because it's crazy architecture, it's a masterpiece because the people are very happy." ♠

*Editor: Deborah Webster*

## Essence of Provence

(Continued from page 128) French doors on the ground floor and the bedrooms' small square windows all open onto a Provençal panorama. On a clear day you can see all the way to Cannes, ten miles away on the coast. The afternoon sun filtering through slatted shutters gives the bedrooms a shadowy quality, and a siesta after a day's wanderings seems nearly irresistible.

Dinner is served in a room off the entrance hall whose walls, hung with eighteenth-cen-

tury Aubusson canvas tapestry patterns, can be glimpsed through curving double doors of carved walnut. The Amics' round dining table can accommodate ten people—and almost invariably does.

The cook, Josette, Henri's wife, has been serving up meals at La Prouveresse for as long as her husband has been trimming its hedges, and she remembers a guest's culinary idiosyncrasies from one summer to the next. A typical La Prouveresse dinner, served on chunky off-white Moustiers faience plates with the vivid green bubbled-glasses Irène buys from nearby Biot, might begin with a plate of squash flower fritters, a

house specialty. A salade niçoise might follow, then the herb-flavored onion, black olive, and anchovy tart sprinkled with sliced tomatoes known locally as a *pissaladière*. "There are plenty of little chèvre cheeses in the region and wonderful fruit," says Irène of her customary choice of dessert. "The strawberries, raspberries, and apricots are so much tastier than those we get in Paris."

To hear Irène talk, all pleasures are experienced more intensely here. Certainly it's hard to argue the point, surrounded by the combined perfume of raspberries, grapevines, jasmine, rosemary, lavender, and roses. ♠

*Editor: Deborah Webster*

## Royal Lineage

(Continued from page 154) hands."

Garcia defines himself this way: "I am an art lover, a professional decorator, and almost an architect—I love to restructure things. Don't count on me to hang up fabrics and put together a lot of doodads in a place with modern volumes, the way they do in the United States."

The Mansart town house was a wreck when Garcia came to it five years ago. All that was left inside to be classified as historic were the ceiling paintings by Pierre Mignard and Charles Le Brun, who had worked in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Garcia installed doors, tapestries, mirrors, and new flooring and fitted everything in with such apparent inevitability that it is hard to believe it is all in fact a hybrid pastiche of a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century environment. Visitors come away wondering not so much how he did the place but rather how this young man could have acquired such an extraordinary historical monument for himself.

Garcia's rise to regal heights of splendor is

a subject that never ceases to fascinate admiring and envious colleagues. After all, he went first from the École des Arts Décoratifs to a small job in a decorator's workshop specializing in contemporary furniture where he spent several years. (He is still open to projects involving any period.) But as he pursued his career, he was developing as a collector of fine old objects. He began buying at the age of fourteen. When he was eighteen, he sold his bibelots at a nice profit and embarked on a spiral of trading up which led ultimately to his position as the arbiter of things royal. "I no longer have the means for these things," Garcia explained, "but I was interested before a lot of people in very great objects which are worth crazy prices today but which I was able to buy when they commanded bourgeois prices."

Just eight years ago, he pointed out, before the Getty Museum and American collectors such as Mrs. J. Seward Johnson came strongly into the market, he was able to buy a chair that had belonged to Louis XIV's dauphin for 100,000 francs. Today he estimates it's worth ten times that figure, at least. The market had been soft, he explained, because average French taste, even among collectors,

"doesn't appreciate extravagant things. The French will buy a little Louis XV commode with nice marquetry, but they won't buy a sublime commode that is all banged up—it's too much for them. The sublime was expensive, but at the time no more expensive than average things."

French taste at its height, on the other hand, he said, has a passion for extravagance tempered by a playful ease. It perceives even the jokes, or at least the smiles, that shine through the splendor—the jolly incongruity of the maiden in silk robes holding a handful of fish on the tapestry in his main salon. Or the "bad taste" of fat flowers on the upholstery of one of his Louis XIV chairs.

By now a smell of cooked potatoes was pervading Garcia's "cozy museum." His houseboy, in an oversize waiter's jacket and a pair of Levi's, was starting to fidget. Before taking polite leave, I peeked into the kitchen. I saw a table set for one where the current master of Mansart's town house would have dinner. Afterward he'd go back up to what he confessed was a mess. Up there, among the Art Deco, the new and the nothing, on another level of his life, he enjoys "a sentiment of liberty—I'd say almost of youth." ♠

## Hands of Time

(Continued from page 140) limit of the desirably worn-away, so he had replacements stitched together from a velvet negligée fabric he found in China. He is pleased that they're finally acquiring a worn look. There are actual Louis XVI pieces such as a mammoth Jacob sofa over seven feet long, above which hang two large paintings attributed to Girodet-Trioson, the classically trained Romantic artist who worked for the royal court. In the middle of all this pedigree furniture there are some mutts, too. The centerpiece of the living room is a nineteenth-century *borne*, a round sofa Mr. H. found in New York and refers to as "corny hotel deluxe." It looks like a wedding cake. One of the bedrooms has a shocking-pink bed inspired by Schiaparelli and designed—or, as he says, "cooked up"—by Mr. H. himself.

Everyone who sees Mr. H.'s apartment says it seems like a place in their dreams. So memorable a place can unearth your deepest feelings. This happened to Pip in *Great Ex-*

pectations

, too. After that first sight of Miss Havisham's he was never the same. Dickens expressed it for Pip—and for us—perfectly: "Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day." Mr. H.'s first links came from houses that intrigued him because of how they were decorated, a great-aunt's house, for example, and places in Texas which he knows very well, and later the magnificent rooms in the Château de Fontainebleau, and rooms full of personal style and extraordinary art in Paris, New York, and elsewhere. It's hard to imagine Mr. H. doing up his flat in France without all these views to the past. He has always been attracted to what he calls "ghost chasing," a decorating style he says disappeared in the 1960s when everything went minimal. Although Mr. H. is as American as a cowboy, it is impossible to conceive of his paradise for biographers as being anywhere but the country it is in. As he says, "It's very French. It's a literary place in the spirit of Violet, who was an old Francophile." Like Mr. H. ■

## Princess in the Garden

(Continued from page 112) Sturdza has gardened since her Norwegian childhood, so it wasn't surprising that she started all over again at Le Vasterival. The site was thickly covered with nettles, brambles, tree stumps; wild boars rooted the place up regularly—"27 times," says the princess. Scouring winds continue to sweep off the English Channel. "In 1978 we lost five hundred trees and shrubs in a hurricane," she recalls.

A sporting gardener, she thrives on disaster and could probably make a garden in a minefield. Energetic and indomitable, she is a natural survivor and teacher. (At Le Vaster-

ival she gives garden seminars for up to twelve people in any one of six languages.) She stands on a muddy hillside, remembering how this recent project began. "A transport ministry chief came to visit"—Le Vasterival is open by appointment—"and since he had never seen a garden like this, he asked what he could do," she begins. "I could hardly say no, could I? And it was necessary to remove all these trees and their stumps," she continues, deadpan. She gestures at the devastation—the proud work of two bulldozer operators who labored for nine days to clear the new site—and her face breaks into what could only be called a grin, even on a princess. ■ *Editor: Mary-Sargent Ladd* (For information on Princess Sturdza's U.S. lecture and seminar this fall see Resources.)

## Norman Retreat

(Continued from page 146) forebear Robert, Baron Clive, of whom Macaulay wrote that England "scarcely ever produced a man more truly great, either in arms or in council." "Lord Clive," Worms muses, "let's see, when did he conquer India?"

The paintings of storm-tossed ships on the sitting room walls also reflect the family history. The firm originally began as a shipping

company in 1848, transporting coal and gypsum. When the Suez Canal was built, the Worms family owned a huge coal deposit in Alexandria, so its fuel supplied Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the canal.

With greater European unity in the offing, particularly between France and Britain, the two countries, though they may never be the best of friends, look to be losing much of their mutual enmity—or at least suspicion. "I think," says the hybrid Worms, "by 1992 I'm going to be less of a queer fish." ■ *Editor: Deborah Webster*

# Flips its lid?



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## Le Style Grange

(Continued from page 104) totem, the master of a sobriety that approaches anonymity.

Marie-Laure, the woman who had always been a great patron of painters and decorators—and who, with her husband, even commissioned Buñuel to make a movie—fired Grange's imagination. (He keeps Man Ray's photo of her close at hand.) He learned from her how to mix things from every period and how to avoid dreary made-for-museum recreations of other epochs. "Take this room," he says proudly. "Doesn't it give you the feeling of a nineteenth-century salon? And yet I've achieved that effect completely with twentieth-century things."

François-Marie Banier also introduced Grange to Madeleine Castaing, the doyenne of Parisian antiques dealers and decorators. As Banier puts it, "Marie-Laure had given Jacques a taste for palaces. Now Madeleine taught him a sense of the lovers' retreat, of the couple's domain. She taught him intimacy." This double aptitude—for the grandiose and the intimate, for the luxurious and the humble—alternates in Grange's designs. These same influences prompt Pierre Le-Tan, a top Paris illustrator—he has done covers for *The New Yorker* and drawings for *Condé Nast Traveler*—to rank Grange as "the best decorator around." As he puts it, "Grange has a gift for comfort and subtlety. He doesn't overdecorate. If I see a piece of furniture that's extremely simple, even casual—some 1920s oak, say—I'll call Jacques and tell him about it. I hate most decorators, but Jacques learned from Marie-Laure to recognize quality."

Fame as a decorator came to Grange in the 1970s when Yves Saint Laurent (yet another person he'd met through François-Marie Banier) began to use him. "Yves and I had known each other quite a while," Grange recalls, "and of course he'd never asked me for my professional opinion. Then one day he invited me to decorate his studio. Then his house in Deauville. We became close friends through working together. He'd never had a decorator do any of his residences before. We found we had the same background and similar tastes—Marie-Laure, again, and a passion for the paintings of Christian Bérard."

Grange is anything but a dictator designer. He works with friends—Isabelle Adjani, Pierre Bergé, Paloma Picasso—who are the sort of people who would do their own decorating if they had enough time and energy. But he's not a slave to their whims. For instance, Saint Laurent wanted Grange to rig

up a teahouse in the garden at Deauville which would be a bit of transplanted Morocco, but Grange had just been to Russia, where he'd done the stage settings for Saint Laurent's dress collection, and he'd been inspired by a visit to Tolstoy's country house. "So I built Yves a Russian dacha!"

Not everyone is so infatuated with Grange's style. One client complained of the decorator's fondness for the color the French call *caca d'oie*, which might be politely translated as goose droppings. An American fashion editor remarked, "It's all flea market crap that we Americans don't have the wit to appreciate. You know, a Moroccan pot, a coconut-fiber rug, a metal statue of a laughing black boy, a bamboo hatstand—yuk!"

Andrée Putman tried to be polite: "He has a certain elegance and ease in his mixtures—a pretty way of mixing things. But his work and world are very far from mine. Who gave you the comical idea of asking me about Jacques Grange? Who, I must add, had an extraordinary physical beauty when he was young." An editor working for a French decorating magazine told me, "He knows all the good craftsmen and antiques dealers—and that's that. His own taste is very old-fashioned. He's no Philippe Starck or Andrée Putman. He spends hours with Adjani at the flea market. *Objets de curiosité*—that's his specialty. Nothing modern about that."

"Not at all true," insists Marie-Paule Pellé, creative director of *Condé Nast Traveler* who used to edit *Vogue Décoration* and who has known Grange for years. "He's a person of enormous culture. He may be eclectic, but he has his own style. He would never compromise to land a big client. He's quite simply the nicest person in the business—generous, discreet, a faithful friend. And he's modern—he adapted the Madeleine Castaing style to our times."

If Grange is so often associated with Yves Saint Laurent, the link is no accident. Both men represent the French tradition of high finish and immaculate construction. Both have a sure sense of color, a curiosity about the whole Mediterranean world, and an interest in the past—but both realize that other periods and places must be interpreted in new terms through their own sensibilities. And both live their lives through their work, which is a juncture between caprice and culture, nonchalance and effort. What could be more frivolous than a frock or a curtain? And what is more precise than the construction of a garment or the matching up of rare woods? This rigorous frivolity is what France prizes most in the decorative arts. No wonder Jacques Grange feels so thoroughly Gallic. ■

Editor: Deborah Webster

## What Price Glory?

(Continued from page 124) of historic preservation, the renovation of the fin de siècle Gare d'Orsay into the national museum of nineteenth-century art is nonetheless an ultimate failure because of the dismal way in which its glorious painting collection is displayed and lit. Perhaps the idea that a train station could be turned into a functional art gallery was misconceived from the start.

To the east of the Musée d'Orsay is the Institut du Monde Arabe by Jean Nouvel, the young French architect widely touted as his country's most important new talent since Le Corbusier died almost 25 years ago. The inclusion of this study center, conference hall, and museum among the Grands Projets is a significant reaffirmation of France's long-standing relations with the Arab world. The ten-story high-tech structure is reminiscent of Paris's Maison de Verre, the celebrated house of 1928–32 by Pierre Chareau in which translucent glass-lens panels give the walls an ethereal luminosity. At the Institut du Monde Arabe the lenses are set within a metal framework of stylized Islamic inspiration, imbuing this sleek building with a symbolism appropriate to both the large Muslim community in France and their brethren abroad.

In the northeastern fringes of Paris are clustered another three of the Grands Projets. The most playful is the Parc de la Villette by Bernard Tschumi, who was named dean of the Columbia University's School of Architecture last year. His concept for the park is decidedly citified, acknowledging the unsparing site in a gritty working-class neighborhood by not trying to prettify it in any conventional sense. Using a strict grid pattern to establish a sense of order in this featureless place, Tschumi has spaced a series of fifteen architectural follies (out of an eventual thirty) evenly over the expansive, unshaded plain. Made of red enameled steel paneling, the structures are inventive caprices on early Modernist themes. Although the amiable follies exude an ingratiating toy-like charm, they are also perfectly serious exercises in pure design which will engage specialists as well as the many pleasure seekers who have already made the Parc de la Villette a favorite new destination in Paris.

Nearby in the park is architect Adrien Fainsilber's City of Science and Industry, a mammoth technology museum. It seems like a vestige of a 1960s world's fair, a retrograde impression underscored by the space-age Géode, a 116-foot mirror-finish stainless-steel sphere. Also in the Parc de la Villette is

the City of Music by Christian de Portzamparc, another rising star in France's younger generation of architects. Only the Conservatory building of this complex will be completed this year, but it seems likely to rank high among the Grands Projets.

The Opéra de la Bastille has been the biggest organizational mêlée of the Mitterrand program. In Charles Garnier's grandiloquent Opéra of 1861–75, Paris can claim the world's most ostentatious and least efficient music theater. For decades the need for a new one has been manifest, and in 1983 a competition for a modern opera house was finally held. First prize was presented to the anonymous entry the jury assumed had been submitted by the American architect Richard Meier. So sure were they that a call was made to the Meier office to convey congratulations—until it was discovered that the designer was not Meier at all but an unknown Canadian architect named Carlos Ott.

Thus began the most bedeviled of the Grands Projets. Architecturally, this frigid \$500 million pile on the place de la Bastille—site of the prison where the Revolution began—proves why only Meier can do Meier. The overblown forms, crude detailing, and shoddy craftsmanship are astonishingly amateurish, all the more shocking because of the importance this building holds in the cultural life of France. The critical moment will come with the premiere of the main hall on the eve of Bastille Day, when its acoustical and operational qualities will be put to the test. But even that will not end the strife. Ever since the abrupt dismissal this past January of artistic director Daniel Barenboim by the president of the Théâtres de l'Opéra de Paris, Pierre Bergé (business head of the Yves Saint Laurent fashion empire), this already embattled enterprise has become even more embroiled in conflict. How it will all end is anyone's guess, but as violinist Isaac Stern quipped during a recent visit to Paris, "This is the *real* Folies-Bergé."

The last—and in quality one of the least—of the Grands Projets is the Grande Arche de la Défense. A 35-story office building in the shape of an open-ended cube, it stands at the western terminus of the axis that begins five miles away at the Louvre. La Défense is an elephants' graveyard of hulking skyscrapers correctly deemed inappropriate for the historic center of Paris and thus banished to the city limits where they can do less harm. It was hoped that the cynosure of the Grande Arche would pull this farrago of ill-assorted high rises into the coherent fabric of Paris by completing the sequence begun by the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel next to the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe approximately mid-

# Looks like



WIMPY, WIMPY,  
WIMPY.

# What Price Glory?

way between the museum and La Défense. That was a futile expectation. The gimmicky Grande Arche, a showy but vapid design by the late Danish architect Johan Otto von Spreckelsen, does nothing to establish its setting as anything other than an urban nightmare. Faced in glass and white marble, the scaleless and surrealistic Grande Arche embodies all the overbearing characteristics of French official style at its worst.

In the end the great paradox of the Grands Projets is this: how can a country so self-conscious about its cultural heritage honor it and then mock it by such dramatic turns? In a period of increasing respect for the architectural past, France remains perpetually hooked on the myth of the new. This is a nation that will never spawn a Prince Charles speaking out against modernity and defending reactionary ways. François Mitterrand, fervent prophet of the future, is the perfect architectural advocate for the French.

One key to understanding this is the Eiffel Tower, a century old this year. Decried upon its completion as an eyesore, it is now a beloved landmark. This about-face occurred because the Eiffel Tower remains constantly startling and yet utterly familiar, the definitive emblem of the French belief in technology as the outward sign of reason. This idiosyncratic excrescence is in keeping with the shared notion that Paris is unlike any other city in the world. But how far can change be taken before Paris becomes unrecognizable? That is the risk posed by the Grands Projets, which illuminate the City of Light in part but threaten to extinguish its distinctive character as a whole. ♠

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## Resources

### NOTES

**Page 23** Profils chair, available late 1989, to the trade at Ligne Roset USA, NYC (212) 685-2238. Palais-Royal chair, approx \$250, special order at Academy, Paris 43-29-07-18. Les Trois Etats de la Santé chair, by Arnould van Geuns and Clemens Rameckers, for Galerie Néotu, similar one-of-a-kind works, special order at Furniture of the Twentieth Century, NYC (212) 929-6023.

### DESIGN

**Page 32** Scarf, \$175, plates, to order at Hermès, NYC, Beverly Hills, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Honolulu, Houston, Palm Beach, San Francisco. Nevada bowl, \$3,990, paperweights, \$200 ea, glasses, \$230 ea, at Daum Boutique, NYC (212) 355-2060. Daybed, \$2,315, at Noblesse Oblige, Paris 45-55-20-43. Little Kiwis and a Cactus cotton on daybed, 55" wide, \$40 m, Rather Normal Kiwis with a Few Stray Shellfish cotton in foreground, 55" wide, \$45 m, for Noblesse Oblige, to order at Umbrello, NYC (212) 941-7800. This Way Up lamp, at Liex, Paris 40-29-02-25.

### EDITOR'S PAGE

**Page 67** Walls/screen, by Paulin Paris, Paris 45-53-13-65. Curtain rod, \$85, to the trade at Houlès, NYC, Los Angeles. Vive la Reine chair, \$910, at Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, Paris 42-60-78-40.

### STARCK MODERN

**Pages 80-81** Spine chair, A.D. Decorative Arts, London 1-960-3304. Wings chair, by Marc Brazier Jones, \$1,250, at Galerie Yves Gastou, Paris 46-34-72-17. Romantica chair, for Driade, at Furniture of the Twentieth Century, NYC; Modern Living, Los Angeles. Crystal vase, from Étrangetés collection, \$2,000, at Daum Boutique, NYC (212) 355-2060. **82** Tokyo building model, \$578, Le Moult house model, \$547, at Édifices, Paris 45-48-53-60. Ashtray, \$31, Les Trois Suisses, Paris 45-84-15-55. **83** Chair/stool, at Furniture of the Twentieth Century, Modern Living (see above). **84** Mirror, #438, at Édifices (see above).

### PRINCESS IN THE GARDEN

**Pages 108-13** In Portland, Oct. 6-8, Hardy Plant Soc. of Oregon, contact C. Hanni, 33530 Southeast Bluff Rd., Boring, OR 97009. In Los Angeles, Oct. 12, Friends of French Art, call (213) 377-4444.

### IN HER OWN FASHION

**Page 114** Custom-printed silk on curtains, to the trade at Thorp of London, Paris 47-53-76-37. **116** Striped damask, by Pansu, 1.3 m wide, \$67.50 m, on sofa, by Prelle, 1.3 m wide, \$51 m, at Anne Caracciolo, Paris 42-61-22-22. **117** Antique cashmere shawl, similar ones, at Haga, Paris 42-22-82-40.

### THE ESSENCE OF PROVENCE

**Pages 128-29** Damascato cotton on table, 1 m wide, \$39 m, at David Hicks, Paris 43-26-00-67.

### BARBARIANS AT PLAY

**Page 132** Gazebo cotton, 1.4 m wide, \$61 m, to the trade at Étamine, Paris, 43-25-70-65. **133** Co-carde chair, one of eight, \$5,470, at V.I.A., Paris 42-33-14-33. **134** Vive Alma chintz, to the trade at Manuel Canovas, NYC, Los Angeles; Curran & Assoc., Atlanta, High Point; Nancy Miklos Mason, Birmingham; Shecter-Martin, Boston; Donghia Showrooms, Chicago, Cleveland, Dania, San Francisco, Washington, D.C.; David Sutherland, Dallas, Houston; Shears & Window, Denver; Matches, Philadelphia; James Goldman & Assocs., Seattle. **135** Doubleglaze cotton on chairs, by Designers Guild, 55" wide, \$44 yd, to the trade at Osborne & Little, NYC; Ainsworth-Noah, Atlanta; Shecter-Martin, Boston; Designers Choice, Chicago; Boyd-Levinson, Dallas, Houston; Design West, Dania; Kneadler-Fauchère, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco; Darr-Luck, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C.; Stephen E. Earls, Port-

land. Trapani collection candelabra, to order at Daum Boutique, NYC (212) 355-2060.

### NORMAN RETREAT

**Pages 142-45** Grenades Tapestry cotton, to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Dania, Denver, Houston, Laguna Niguel, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Troy, Washington, D.C. **143-44** Velours Quadrille silk on chairs, 25" wide, \$510 yd, to the trade at Clarence House, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Dania, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Troy. **146** Rayures Palmes cotton on bed and walls, to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils (see above).

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**Pages 149-50** Châteauneuf Bemberg cotton damask on small sitting room walls, 1.3 m, \$122 m, to the trade at Braquené, Paris 48-04-30-03. **154-55** Ninon green and yellow silk taffetas, by Verseta, to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils (see above for pgs 142-45).

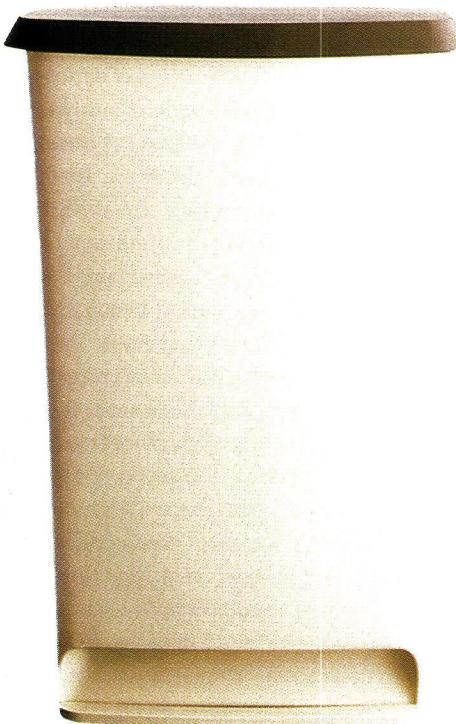
### SAMPLES

**Page 162** Top row, from left: The Bee: Napoleon Lampas silk/rayon, to the trade at Scalaramé, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Laguna Niguel, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington D.C.; JEH/Denver, Denver; Fee-McClaran, Honolulu; Gene Smiley, Minneapolis; S. C. Smith, Phoenix; James Goldman & Assocs., Seattle. Sting silk, to the trade at Gretchen Bellinger, for nearest showroom call (718) 729-2850. Giant Fleur de Lys cotton, 50" wide, \$96.75 yd, to the trade at André Bon, NYC; Travis-Irvin, Atlanta; Leonard Hecker, Boston; Nicholas Karas, Chicago; John Edward Hughes, Dallas, Denver, Houston; Todd Wiggins, Dania, Miami; Shears & Window, Laguna Niguel; Hinson & Co., Los Angeles; JW Showroom, Philadelphia; Thomas Griffith, San Francisco; Mattoon, Seattle; Rist Corp., Washington, D.C. Belgique cotton/acetate, to the trade at Scalaramé (see above). Imperiale wool/acrylic pile, to the trade at Gretchen Bellinger (see above). Giuliano cotton, 54" wide, \$42 yd, to the trade at Laura Ashley, for nearest showroom call (800) 847-0202. Napoleonic Bee cotton, 54" wide, \$30 yd, to the trade at Duralee, for nearest showroom call (516) 273-8800. Wheat Sheaf cotton/rayon, 54" wide, \$34 yd, to the trade at Duralee (see above). Bottom row, from left: Napoleonic Bee (see above). Sting silk (see above). Beeze cotton/rayon, 54" wide, \$58 yd, to the trade at Payne Fabrics, for nearest showroom call (800) 543-4322. Fleur de Lys cotton, 50" wide, \$144 yd, to the trade at André Bon (see above). Fleur de Lis woven cotton, 51" wide, to the trade at Quadrille Wallpapers & Fabrics, NYC; Marion Kent, Atlanta, High Point, Washington, D.C.; Leonard Hecker, Boston; Rozmallyn, Chicago, Minneapolis; John Edward Hughes, Dallas, Houston; Hugh Cochran, Dania; J. Robert Scott, Laguna Niguel, Los Angeles; JW Showroom, Philadelphia; Thomas & Co., Phoenix; Shears & Window, San Francisco; Jane Piper Reid, Seattle; Campbell-Louis, Troy. Petit Fleur de Lis horsehair, by Peter Schneider, 25" wide, \$104.25 yd, to the trade at Decorators Walk, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Troy, Washington, D.C. Agilon Lampas viscose, 51" wide, \$174 yd, to the trade at André Bon (see above). Bee on Moiré cotton/acetate, by Peter Schneider, 47" wide, \$62.25 yd, to the trade at Decorators Walk (see above). Napoleonic Bee rayon, 50" wide, \$126 yd, to the trade at Schumacher, for nearest showroom call (800) 423-5881. Sting silk (see above). Shell cotton, 54" wide, \$58 yd, to the trade at Payne Fabrics (see above). Napoleonic Bee (see above). ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE

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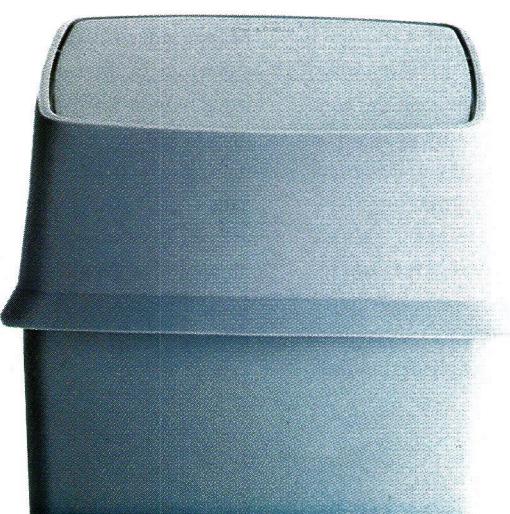
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# Gandee AT LARGE

My dinner with Andrée

**T**hings would have been a lot more comfortable had Joan Collins come down from her suite at the Paris Ritz. Because if the overripe television star had shown up at the grand hotel's Espadon restaurant the night she checked in, the couple seated next to Andrée Putman and me would have had something to stare at—other than Madame Putman, that is. As it was, of course, the rude couple spent the evening with their eyes shamelessly riveted to my dinner companion, who, to be perfectly honest, looks a bit like an exotic hybrid of Lotte Lenya and Diana Vreeland.

She arrived fifteen minutes early dressed in a short black Azzéine Alaïa sheath with a shiny zipper running diagonally across the back and a large rhinestone brooch in the shape of a seashell pinned to the front. The silver metallic toe caps on her black kid Chanel pumps shimmered as she crossed the room, drawing the eye downward to her legs, which are, judging by the height of her hem, a feature she is most proud of. The first thing she did was pull out a fluted cigarette case and lay it lovingly on the table. The second thing she did was summon the sommelier and say, in that low thick husky voice of hers, "Champagne." Somehow he knew she didn't mean a glass, so he brought a bottle.

According to *Vanity Fair*, Andrée Putman is the "most exciting interior designer on either side of the Atlantic." Or at least she was in 1984, when the magazine photographed her standing regally in a shower stall at Morgans, the wildly successful hotel she designed for Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell in Manhattan. But on this particular evening in Paris, Andrée isn't much interested in talking about design. Fashion is on her mind. "I love America, and I love American women. But there is one thing that deeply shocks me—American closets. I cannot believe one can dress well when you have so much." She reported that her own closet consists of a freestanding



eight-foot-long copper clothing rack. "At a certain time of your life, you should have almost no choices," she explained, adding that Jean-Michel Frank, the legendary furniture designer, was her sartorial ideal because his wardrobe consisted of forty identical gray suits. "I love that idea. To me, it's perfect—the ultimate."

In the wake of fashion, the conversation took a more general, more personal turn. "The beauty of my life is that I was never wounded by the fact that people thought I was crazy," confessed Andrée. And as if to underscore the point, she recalled her little-known acting debut fifteen years ago in an underground film in which she played a client of a male bordello: "I had the most beautiful dress and the most beautiful makeup, I felt like an absolute star." Her opening line to artist Niki de Saint-Phalle, who played the madam, was, "Do you still have cowboys?" The bordello, alas,

was all out. Her closing line was, tellingly enough, "I'll take them all."

Such odd autobiographical lore, of course, adds to the mystique that is Andrée Putman. It conspires with her remarkable appearance and grand manner to give her a strange otherworldly allure. Just how much her phenomenal success as a designer can be attributed to her phenomenal persona is anyone's guess. But nowadays, in the era of the personality cult, it should not be underestimated.

Of her success, Putman claims, "It will never spoil me because it doesn't happen to me. It happens to that person who enjoys social life and human beings, who functions out of curiosity and passion." Although she may attribute her success to her alter ego, Andrée has nonetheless been tireless in its pursuit. Since 1980, when she introduced herself to the world as a designer, her shades-of-gray palette, her taste for mixing early Modern furniture with more "bizarre" pieces, her fascination with the chessboard as a decorative motif, have all become well known thanks, in no small part, to Madame Putman's exquisite flair for public relations.

She conducts her worldwide operations from a trilevel office in the Marais district. The centerpiece of the minimalist loftlike space is an enormous fish tank that has no fish. Her current projects range from an "undersized" office furniture collection for Japan to a new desert palace for a 32-year-old prince in Saudi Arabia. Écart, Putman's furniture company, is also flourishing thanks to its inventory of classic Modern pieces by Eileen Gray, René Herbst, Jean-Michel Frank, and Robert Mallet-Stevens. And then there is her licensing division, which is presided over by a young man named Georges—"a strikingly good-looking guy with very dark hair," according to his employer. Of her 28-member staff, she noted that most are "very very young people, between 24 and 26." Then she added: "I have never any friends of my age." Since the subject had been raised, I decided to pursue it. "Has anyone ever asked you how old you are?" I queried, with polite obliqueness. "You know, I never answer," said Andrée, "because I am stupid enough to think I look younger than my age." Not knowing what age that might be, of course, made it impossible to comment.

Charles Gandee